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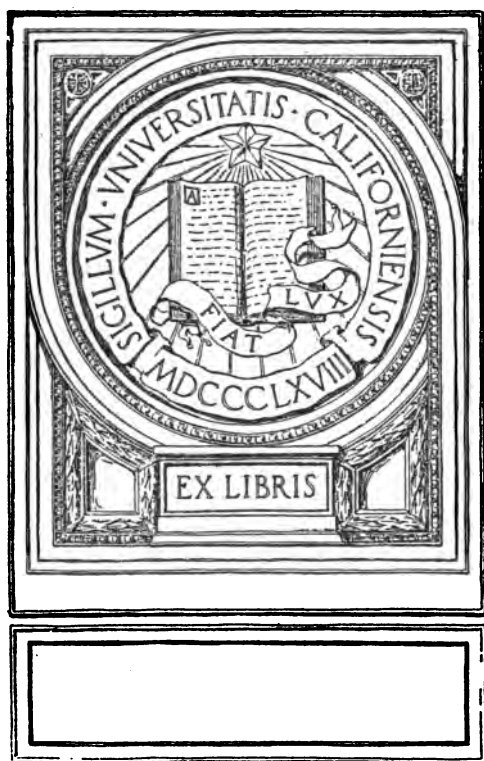
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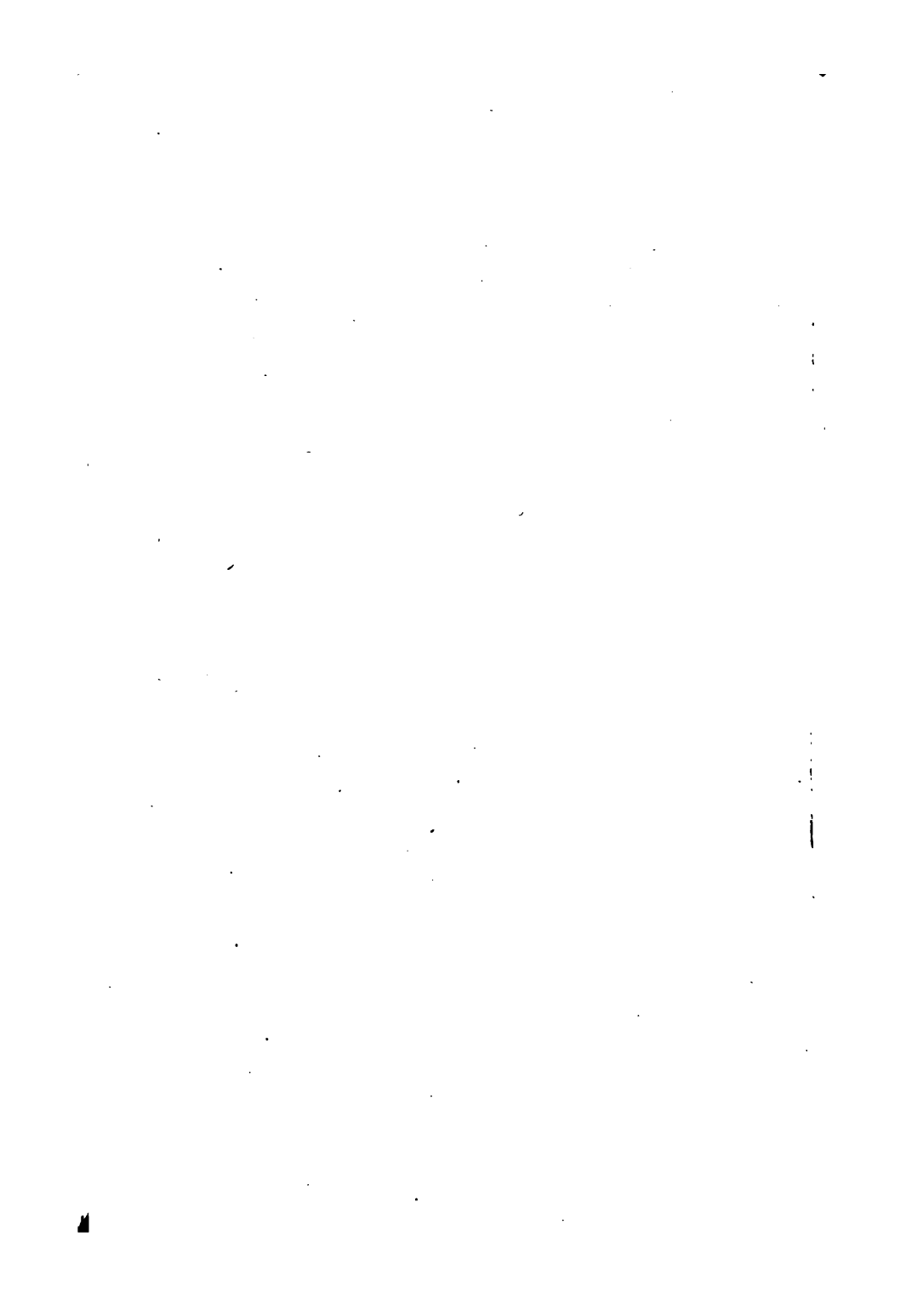
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THE FAULTS OF
CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

O'SHEA





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BY

M. V. O'SHEA

Professor of Education, The University of Wisconsin
and

Educational Director,
Mother's Magazine and Home Life

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The Parent's Library

A series of practical books relating to the care and culture of the young, published under the editorial supervision of Professor M. V. O'Shea of the University of Wisconsin, Educational Director, and Mr. Paul E. Watson, Editorial Director, of *Mother's Magazine and Home Life*, in coöperation with which magazine this Library has been prepared.

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FOREWORD

The author of this volume has served for many years as educational director of *Mother's Magazine and Home Life* and also as chairman of the department of education of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. During these years he has discussed a large number of problems of child training with parents and teachers whom he has addressed and who have taken advantage of the opportunity offered by the Personal Service Bureau of *Mother's Magazine and Home Life* to seek counsel and assistance in the rearing of their children. They have freely sought the author's advice and they have given him their experiences in employing various methods in the instruction and discipline of their children. It has been his custom to select the more fundamental and important questions asked by parents and teachers and submit them for investigation to groups of advanced students engaged in the study of child nature and education. It has generally turned out that the author has made practical suggestions to those who have consulted him and they have in most

cases made a trial of these suggestions and have reported the results to the author. In this way a great many concrete instances illustrating characteristic traits of childhood and youth have been accumulated, and the outcome of different methods of dealing with them has been accurately recorded. In the preparation of this volume the author has chosen for discussion the more vital of the problems which have been treated in the manner indicated, and he has suggested how these may best be solved under the conditions existing in different types of homes, schools and communities.

The author has kept constantly in mind that most parents and teachers are neither familiar with nor interested in technical psychology, biology or hygiene. They are concerned with the immediate and pressing problems of guiding children in their intellectual, physical, ethical, and temperamental development. They wish to understand why children act in certain ways and how they can most effectively divert them from wrong action. Parents and teachers are so engrossed with the concrete activities of childhood and youth that they have little time to consider academic questions pertaining either to the nature of children or to their training; and consequently the author has avoided practically all merely theoretical exposition in this volume. He has confined the discussion throughout to typical

situations which confront most parents continually in the upbringing of their children. He has used terms which can be understood by those who have had little or no study of psychology, physiology and related sciences, though the suggestions for child training given herein are based upon data derived from these sciences.

The author has not allowed himself to forget at any time that this book is designed for practitioners who are every hour face to face with childhood and youth in the concrete and who are training their children in some way whether right or wrong. He has undertaken the difficult task of applying science to practice without leading the practitioner over the technical ground upon which the practice is based. It would have been a simpler matter to have dwelt principally in the realm of theory and only occasionally to have made practical application of scientific principles.

This is one of a series of four volumes prepared for the Parent's Library. These volumes supplement one another, and are published simultaneously. The title of each indicates that it deals with particular phases of the training of childhood and youth but it has been written with relation to the others in the series. The titles of the four volumes are: "First Steps in Child Training," "Faults of Childhood and Youth," "The Trend of the Teens," "Every-day Problems in Child Training."

The reader should bear in mind that the aim throughout each and all of these books has been to make the discussion intelligible and practical by presenting typical traits of childhood, as exhibited in the ordinary situations of daily life, and then endeavoring to explain these traits and to indicate how they should be dealt with when they are not in accord with the requirements of life in the home, in the school, and in the community.

M. V. O'SHEA.

The University of Wisconsin.

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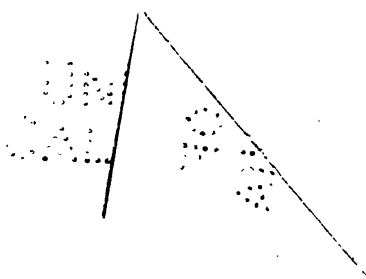
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PART I

**FAULTS DUE TO CONFLICT
BETWEEN CHILDREN'S NAT-
URAL TRAITS AND PRES-
ENT-DAY SOCIAL
CONDITIONS**



FAULTS OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

CHAPTER I

DESTRUCTIVENESS

As these lines are being written a juvenile court judge in a city in the Middle West is determining what should be done with five boys ranging in age from twelve to fifteen who were brought into his court on the charge of maliciously destroying property. They had broken the windows in a house which was temporarily vacant, and had forced their way into the house by battering down a door. They had ransacked the place and had treated the furniture roughly. When they were questioned regarding their motives for this destructiveness, they maintained that they did not "intend to do any harm." They were just "out for a good time." When asked whether they did not know it was wrong to break windows and force open a door, they acknowledged that they thought it was not right, but it did not occur to them that the evil was serious

until after the damage had been done. The judge was apparently unable to decide on the spot whether the boys were consciously guilty of a crime or whether their act was due to thoughtlessness and would not be likely to happen again.

Any psychologist listening to the testimony of these boys would appreciate that they had a quite different view regarding the destruction of property from what either the judge or their parents or any other adult present had. They were sorry they had been caught; that was evident. But it was doubtful if they deeply regretted having damaged the house and furniture. Whatever feelings they experienced in regard to the matter had reference to the punishment which might be meted out to them by their parents or the judge more than to the loss and discomfort which they occasioned the owner of the property. *Property* does not mean the same to them that it means to the judge or to their parents or to the owner of the house. To the latter it represents in the first place effort, work, thoughtfulness, saving, sacrifice; and also it means protection from distress or harm.

The parents told the judge they recognized the serious character of the boys' offense, and they promised that they would restore the property and they would guarantee that the boys would never again be guilty of similar misconduct. The only excuse they made for the boys was that they

were young and did not appreciate what they were doing. The last phrase is a significant one to any psychologist. The boys did not know that they were undoing what it had cost someone a good deal of strain and stress to do. They had not had experience in producing property of any kind, but especially of the kind they injured. They had only a very obscure sense of its value because they could not judge it in terms of the effort and sacrifice required to secure it. If they had had to struggle hard to obtain houses for themselves, the memory of the effort they had put forth and the emotions connected therewith would probably have restrained them when they were tempted to commit an act of vandalism. It is experience of this sort which plays the chief rôle in restraining their parents and all other normal adults from wanton destruction.

The boys derived a considerable amount of exhilaration and delight from throwing stones through the windows; this they acknowledged. From whence comes this abnormal pleasure? In the World War the Germans gave an exhibition of it, and they justify their action on the grounds that if it gets the chance an army should destroy all the property of its enemies so that the latter will be handicapped in continuing the struggle. It is a primitive, barbaric trait to destroy the possessions of all with whom an individual or a tribe may be at the moment, or may in the future

come to be, in conflict for one reason or another. Children apparently retain something of this old elemental instinct. There appears to be some reminiscence, happily rather faint, of the ancient impulse to rob anyone of anything he possesses which might give him an advantage in the struggle for economic or social supremacy. If he has a domicile, injure it by stoning it or burning it; if he has horses or cattle, kill them or release them so that they will escape; if he has a fine lawn, run over it; and so on at any length.

Another difference between a child or youth and an adult in respect to the conservation of property is that the former does not appreciate its value in protecting him from harm, or in relieving distress, or in giving him social prestige. A boy is much more careless in the treatment of clothes, for instance, than is his father. He is rough and unrestrained in his actions in his house so that he often injures the house itself or the furniture. He will use his knife in carving the woodwork or the chairs or other articles, whereas his father or any other normal adult could not be induced to do damage of this sort. Even in the college period boys are rough and destructive with property as compared with adults. When colleges rent rooms to students they frequently require the latter to give bonds as surety that they will pay for the injury done to college property. But if one will investigate

cases of vandalism in the treatment of college property by students, he will find that it is rare that a boy who has worked his way through the high school and is working his way through the college is careless in the use of college property any more than he is careless with his own property. He, earlier than other boys, gains a notion of what property means in terms of effort and sacrifice; and in comparison with students who have not had experience like his own, he is careful and considerate and restrained in the use of buildings and furniture.

Parents are often distressed because their young children are not careful with their toys and their dishes and their books. Frequently one hears parents say that they are afraid their children who break their toys and dishes will acquire a habit of destructiveness and will not be properly restrained in maturity. This fear is undoubtedly justified in cases where the young can secure all the toys and dishes they wish no matter how they treat them and who, as they develop, have no experience in producing the objects which they destroy or suffering the consequences of their destructive action. If a seven-year-old boy breaks his express wagon "for the fun of it," and he is given another for the asking, he cannot gain experience which will inhibit the impulse to destroy his new wagon. If he throws stones through the windows of his own or

any other house, and the parents replace the broken glass without causing him any distress or requiring any sacrifice from him, he will be likely to continue in his destructive course, though as he develops he will hear people around him condemning such wanton actions, and this will exert some restraining influence upon him.

The gratification of curiosity is at the bottom of a considerable amount of a very young child's eagerness to break dishes, tear books and so on. When this curiosity is indulged in some legitimate way, as when the parent provides worthless books or papers for tearing and makes it clear that all other books must be handled carefully, something may be accomplished in preventing curiosity from being gratified at the expense of valuable property. Nothing will completely subdue the destructive impulse, however, except experience which will make the child appreciate that houses, furniture, dishes, books, wagons, and the like have required work and sacrifice on the part of someone; and they are valuable either for protection or for enjoyment.

The destructive activities of the young are most irritating to adults when they result in damage to artistic possessions such as lawns, flowers, trees, pictures, delicate china and the like. It has never been possible by any kind of education or discipline wholly to prevent children from running across lawns or picking flowers, unless the latter

are securely protected or unless the children are drawn into playgrounds or gymnasiums where they are given freedom to play games in which they are interested. To the young, lawns and flowers and trees and pianos are to be *used*, not to be looked at merely. The typical child from five to fifteen has no appreciation of what is required to secure a beautiful lawn or beautiful flowers or the care and time it requires to produce a beautiful tree. Much less has he any idea of the thought and skill required to produce a beautiful vase or paint a picture or weave a rug. ~~His mind and his muscles are full of one kind of interest—he is *dynamic*; he needs to try out everything in his environment, to *do something with it*, not to keep it for purposes of esthetic enjoyment.~~ So long as adults take the point of view that children should *appreciate* beautiful possessions as they do themselves they will have unending conflict on their hands.

Children who live in the country are not so likely as those who live in towns and cities to indulge their destructive propensities. In the country, the child's motor energies can be and usually are largely expended in constructive ways so that they are not so greatly tempted as are city children to commit acts of lawlessness in the treatment of property. Even quite young children in the country help to produce property. They care for the horses and cows and pigs; they

assist in cultivating the growing crops; they are required to rake the lawn; they may even render some assistance in building the barn or other structures on the farm. Experiences of this kind early impress them with the importance of what it has taken effort and sacrifice to produce. But the children of the towns and the cities who have little opportunity for constructive activities, who do not have access to a public playground, and who do not have workshops in their own homes—such children are certain to expend some of their energy in doing damage to the property about them. If they do not actually destroy it, they will at least be rough and careless in their use of buildings, furniture, lawns, and so on.

The first step in the treatment of the destructive tendency is to provide opportunities for children to be engaged in dynamic, non-destructive activities—in organized play and games, in manual activities, in gardening, in Boy Scout activities, and the like. The second step is to cause them as early as feasible to bear the consequences of their destructive acts. They must replace what they damage either by their own effort or by sacrifice of their allowance, or by going out and working to secure money to pay for what they injure. In this way they will learn the value of property. The parent who shields a boy from all disagreeable experience when he breaks the windows in a house or injures the

furniture or destroys a lawn is simply postponing lessons which sometime must be learned, or eventually the boy will be detained behind iron bars.

CHAPTER II

HEEDLESSNESS

In every home in which there are several children, there is likely to be a more or less marked irresponsible one. It is always possible to tell when such a child has been in the house; he leaves a trail after him. He has cut his finger, say, and has used cloths to remove the blood. You can track him around the house by the cloths he has thrown on the floor. He has changed his clothes to go to a party, and one can find everything he has taken off right where it dropped when he shed it. He reads the paper before any other member of the household, and he leaves the various sections scattered all over the room. He takes tools to fix his boat, and when the father needs to use these same tools he cannot find them. He climbs a tree and forgets to remove his new coat, which is the worse for wear when he returns to the house. When he goes to the pantry to relieve his hunger, he consumes everything he can find, whether or not it has been specially prepared for the approaching meal. He wanders around in sloppy weather

wherever his impulse takes him, and he comes in with wet feet; then he pulls off his shoes and socks in the parlor or living room, and sits around *en dishabille* regardless of the other members of the family. He becomes absorbed in a book and forgets all about his studies, and his teacher reports him as negligent. He goes out just before a meal, and comes back after every one has finished, much to the annoyance of the servants. And so on *ad libitum*.

Such a child may be lacking in mentality, and if so he cannot develop responsibility. A child of feeble mind, if allowed to run at large, is certain to create distress wherever he goes, because he cannot do any complicated thing up to the standard set by the normal people among whom he moves. Persons of ordinary intelligence tend always to use their minds in keeping things in order, in being prompt to meet obligations, in respecting the rights and interests of others, in conforming to conventional standards of etiquette, of decency, etc. But an individual who is sub-normal cannot come up to standards in these respects and so he will be regarded as irresponsible or negligent.

But there are persons, however, both young and old, who have normal intelligence but who have not acquired a high degree of sensitiveness to the views, customs and desires of others. They live a self-indulgent life. They are indifferent

to the opinions of those around them. They are callous to criticism, and they may care but little about the reputation they acquire among the members of their family. They are not eager to gain the good-will and esteem of others. In such persons the physical impulse ordinarily dominates over intellectual and esthetic inhibitions.

It should be remembered in this connection that all young persons; boys especially, are more or less irresponsible when viewed from the adult standpoint. So the parent must have patience and sympathy in dealing with this trait. At the same time the matter must not be ignored. There should be a certain amount of responsibility which should be insisted upon with all children, such as being prompt to meals, keeping one's clothes picked up, not tracking mud into the house, and the like. The reasons why these requirements must be observed by every member of a family can be made clear to any child over five years of age, when responsibilities should begin to be assumed.

If a child persists in being indifferent to reasonable rules and regulations, then he must be made to suffer the consequences of his indifference. If his manners are offensive at the table, he should be denied the right to dine with the family. If he is careless about tracking mud into the house, he should clean up the floors or

rugs which he has soiled. He should restore order wherever he has created disorder. One need not be too harsh nor yet too tender in dealing with this type of child. Mere sentimentality may spoil a boy of this kind. Firmness with justice will alone win out in the training of such an individual.

But unfortunately those who have the task of training a child of this kind are often not as strong or as persistent or as dynamic as he is himself, and so he sheds his training as a duck sheds water. Mere admonition bounds off him without making any impression. What is required is vigor, decision, and regularity in insisting on conformity to the standards of living in the household. Weak, dallying methods will never change an irresponsible child into a responsible one. Mere complaining or exhortation will accomplish little good. Strong, capable leadership alone will win in a case like this.

CHAPTER III

BULLYING

In a small city in the Middle West there is a club of eighteen boys, the youngest of whom is fourteen and the oldest seventeen years of age. They all come from what would be called good homes. The meetings are held in turn at the homes of the members. One who could look on at a meeting but not be observed by the members would have an opportunity to see the traits of a bullying type manifested in characteristic ways. No sooner does H. K. enter a house where a meeting is being held than he begins to take matters in his own hands. His voice is heard above that of every other member of the club. One can tell from his intonations that he is accustomed to lording it over his fellows. There is no suggestion of deference or restraint in his tones. He makes one feel that *his* way must be the *only* way. If he falls into an argument with other members of the group, his voice will mount above the combined voices of his adversaries. He has never been known to "give in" in an argument. He cannot endure to be

worsted in any contest. He will not associate with boys who will not knuckle down to him.

When the club is called to order at one of the meetings and the boys take their seats, H. K. is just as likely as not to put his feet on the center table or on the piano while the meeting lasts. No one else in the club would think of doing it. If a member of the club remonstrates with him, H. K. may say: "Oh, go on! You don't belong to this club. You ought to join a sewing circle. Where's your apron? Is your nurse waiting outside for you?" The other boys seem to enjoy these rough and ready tactics, though they may be good friends of the one who is bullied.

The last thing H. K. thinks of in a meeting is Robert's Rules of Order. Sometimes the other members of the group try to subdue him, but he is immune to their satire and their badinage. He uses strong language which no other member of the club would use, at least at a meeting. One can sometimes hear the other boys say to him: "You forget where you are. Can't you be decent? The people in the house will hear you." But the best they can do is to quiet him but for a moment.

Go to his home and you will find that he exhibits the same domineering traits there. His father is at home only infrequently, so that he does not see much of his boy, and he has played prac-

tically no part in his training. His mother tells him he is too rough and too loud, and bosses too much, but still she cannot make him take her point of view. He is not ugly or mean, but he does bully his mother and two younger sisters.

Go to his school and you will find he has much the same attitude toward the teacher and his schoolmates. The boys claim he always has his teachers "hoodooed." He goes as far as he dares to go in "talking back" to the teachers, and yet he has judgment and self-control enough to avoid a crisis. He has never been dismissed from school, and he has not committed any offense which has been brought to the knowledge of the officers of the law. On the playground the games usually have to go the way he wants them to go. There are some boys who contest his right to leadership, and they have formed little groups of their own, but still he is the dominating personality in the school.

And yet he is a "good fellow." The boys really like him because he is dynamic and resourceful. and usually what he proposes to do they also wish to do. He is original in suggesting plans for adventurous enterprises, and he is persistent and skillful in carrying out any plan in which he is interested. He organizes expeditions into the country. He can and often does get up a dance in an hour, and he makes every member of the club promise to be on hand with a partner.

The chief characteristics of this boy that make him a ruler are his rough masculinity and his cleverness. He is overflowing with unrestrained masculine energy; he is a male in every sense of the word, which means that he likes to play the rôle of boss. Every boy and every man has the possibilities of becoming a boss when he has the right group around him; but the majority of boys and men are sensitive enough to the interests and rights of others so that they can sometimes play a subordinate rôle. But the genuine boss is indifferent to the rights of those about him. His ego surges up so strongly in him that it obscures his vision and dulls his appreciation of the feelings and desires of others. In order that one may follow as well as lead and give the other fellow a chance, one must not possess an ego that is incessantly crowding itself forward, and that cannot be content unless it dominates over all other egos.

The boss probably does not realize that as a matter of habit he rides rough shod over his associates. He does not stop to reflect on this subject. His mind is fired with one aim, and that is to get into the first place; to attract and hold the attention of the group; to lead the crowd. A boss is dominated by the notion of making himself the most conspicuous person wherever he goes, and so there is no room in the focus of his consciousness for any consideration of the desire

of his associates to play the most conspicuous rôle in the group occasionally.

Every observer of human nature probably knows persons who show displeasure the moment anyone else in their group becomes the center of attention. One sometimes sees men of this type who will get up and leave groups when they cannot be the dominating factors in them. They do not know how to listen or admire. All normal persons possess traits which lead them to seek distinction; but they are willing that others should receive their share of attention. This is not so with the boss. This is why he is a boss.

Can the bullying type be toned down by any kind of education or training? He will probably always be more or less of an autocrat; nature has equipped him with such insistent egoistic feelings that no sort of educational treatment will enable him to keep them completely in check. But if a boy of this type can be taken early enough, and brought into contact with strong personalities, he will gain some experience in considering the views and desires of others. Nature always provides means of regulation for all her endowments. Alongside of the domineering instincts of the boss she places a strong desire for approval and a dislike of painful social consequences of any sort. If a boy who early shows the traits of the boss can be kept with boys older, stronger and more resourceful than himself, his egoism will

become subdued in a measure. One can see this illustrated strikingly in school life such as exists at Eton or Rugby in England. Even the boss will be humble in the presence of one who is clearly stronger and more clever than he is himself. One can sometimes observe a boy who has played the bully with everyone in his home community become quite humble when he enters college, and sees that his college mates know a lot more and can do a great deal more than he knows and can do. It would be a means of grace to such a boy if he could be placed for a while in a group in which he is very obviously the inferior, both physically and intellectually, of the other members of the group. Such an experience would tend to hold his rampant ego in check. He would then become alert to the expression of the interests and desires of those about him, which is the end to be aimed at in the training of the boss.

Again, it is possible to develop the idea of fair play in boy groups so that if there is a boss among them they will make him keep his place to some extent, and give all the members a chance. A teacher or a parent can accomplish something in this direction by helping to make the idea of fair play prominent in a group so that each one will have a sense of the rights of the others, and so that if some one member will not play fair all the others will coöperate to make him do so. This is the principle followed in civilized society; and

it can be applied in its elementary form in all groups. There is something about the very term *fair play* that appeals to even quite young boys, and a boy will usually begin to restrain himself when his associates charge him with lack of fair play.

CHAPTER IV

SELF-ASSERTIVENESS

The instinct of self-assertiveness is manifested in all young children under ordinary conditions, even in the face of power which they know to be far greater than their own. When I brag about my strength to G., a six-year-old, and tell him what I could do to him, he at once declares, though his declaration has something of the make-believe about it, that he could do just as much or more to me. Children strive to make themselves believe they are superior to their environment and they endeavor to make the people around them believe the same. One can hear children who are much together debating among themselves as to which one is the strongest, which one can climb the highest, which one can run the fastest, and so on, and each one is usually superior to the others. The typical boy can jump over any fence, climb any tree, go out-of-doors in any weather, stay out at night as well as in the day time, lift any weight, throw a ball or a stone any distance, etc. In his relations to his social environment he can do anything as

well or better than anybody else, whoever it may be, and whether child or adult.

While nature evidently intended that the child should try to make his individuality always prominent, or at least preserve it from effacement or domination by others, still he cannot continue to be a member of a family or a school or society unless he will be docile in his relations with those who know the world and its ways better than he does. He cannot say to the parent or teacher: "I know as much as you do," or "You have no right to tell me what to do," or "If I do not wish to take a part in my work to-day, it is not for you to coerce me. You have no more authority to order me about than I have to give orders to you." Of course, children rarely utter sentiments of this sort, though sometimes they entertain them, and they strive to carry them out as far as they find it safe so to do.

It will be granted that a pupil should play as independent a part in the life of the home and school as the welfare of all will permit. The teacher who suppresses individual initiative and assertiveness on all occasions goes too far in the exercise of his authority; and the same is true in principle of the home. Without a doubt, many teachers and parents err on the side of crushing out egoistic expression. The writer has in mind an instructor who illustrates this point. He cannot endure any display of individuality in his

classroom. He demands rigid order, and he will not permit free discussion of points which come up in recitation. He insists upon his students memorizing the textbook, and reciting it accurately when called upon. He tells them their opinions are not wanted. He is a distinguished man in his special field, but he has grown to be domineering with his students. He is so egoistic himself that he cannot tolerate self-assertiveness in others. He says he can spend his time in a better way than in listening to the notions of "youngsters who know nothing concerning the subjects they argue about."

On the other hand, one sometimes sees parents and teachers who indulge too greatly the egoistic impulses of their children. The writer knows a schoolroom which is in disorder much of the time, principally because four or five boys make themselves so prominent that they distract attention from the legitimate work of the school. They oppose their opinions in a braggart manner to the views of the teacher. It would be of advantage if the teacher would suppress a considerable amount of the self-assertiveness of these boys. They would themselves gain thereby, because they would then be likely to give their attention more fully to matters of real importance for them. If this teacher allows free discussion in class, it will be monopolized by these four or five egoists. They will not listen to the opinions

of those among their classmates whose self-assertion is not so marked.

Often self-assertiveness is so extreme in some children that they will domineer over their fellows. On the playground they may bully them, and on slight provocation engage them in combat with the expectation that they can overcome them. Probably in nine cases out of ten, fighting on the playground is due to the aggression of egoists. If they do not actually come to blows with some of their fellows who have resisted their aggression, they may hector them or abuse them in one way or another. This is a very prolific source of trouble for the parent and the teacher. It will probably be impossible to prevent a considerable amount of this bullying unless boys can be organized in competitive games which will give freedom for self-assertion under rules and regulations. In the game of life it is permissible for an individual to assert himself in any direction provided he gives others freedom to do the same thing. If he has greater strength, or a keener intellect, or greater endurance, or firmer courage than his fellows, then it is right that he should come to the front in these respects. In the same way, pupils may be permitted to express themselves to the full measure of their abilities provided they play fair, and give their fellows an opportunity also to express themselves to the full measure of their abilities.

CHAPTER V

VANDALISM

A survey of boy life has just been completed in a fair-sized middle-western city. It has been found that there are a number of roving bands of boys ranging in age from eight to fifteen years. They wander around the city in search of adventure. They steal fruit from trees in private yards and sometimes they steal from carts of peddlers and even from fruit stands. They make excursions into the country occasionally and steal anything they can lay their hands on. There is a lake on the outskirts of the city and the residents who have lawns on the shore have built private piers. These boys take possession of the piers whenever they want to swim. They undress and dress in public view. The owners of the piers have asked the boys to be thoughtful in their use of the piers, but the boys paid no attention to them. The owners do not like to appeal to the police, but they have about concluded there is no other way to control them.

The survey included a study of the agencies in the city designed to provide occupation and enter-

tainment for young persons who do not have facilities in their own homes. There is a large Y. M. C. A. in this city which was built and is maintained by donations from citizens. The membership fee for boys is ten dollars a year. There are no advantages free for anybody in the Y. M. C. A. The boys who are members are for the most part the boys who do not greatly need the advantages of the Y. M. C. A.; they could be adequately provided for in their own homes; or at least their parents are abundantly able to arrange for their occupation and entertainment. The Y. M. C. A. is not ministering to the boys who most need attention in this city. *or any other city.*

There is an active Chamber of Commerce in the city. The membership fee is fifteen dollars, and the income from this source is upwards of six thousand dollars a year. In its literature it claims to be devoted solely to the interests of the city, but thus far it has done little or nothing to solve constructively the problem of providing occupation and entertainment for the boys of the city. It has various committees, but none is studying ways and means of preventing the formation of wandering gangs that prey upon the property and to some extent upon the persons of people of the city. There is a Rotary Club in this city which has discussed the need of taking aggressive steps to provide boys with adequate facilities for swimming, for gymnastic

exercises, for competitive games and plays, for hikes into the country, and so on. But as yet nothing definite has been done to improve the situation actually existing in the city.

There are truancy officers connected with the school system who look after truants during school days and throughout the school season, but they do not have any authority to provide for gangs of boys on Saturdays or Sundays or during the long summer vacation, which is the crucial period so far as the occupation and entertainment of boys is concerned. There are charitable organizations which aim to relieve physical distress, due to poverty, but they do not give attention to problems connected with the occupations and entertainments of the boys of the city when they are not in school. There is also a Salvation Army that works for the spiritual betterment of those who do not have membership in churches, but they cannot do anything more than give a picnic once a year for all the children of the city who wish to accept the invitation. It is their aim to minister to people, young and old, according to their needs, but they do not have resources which enable them to keep unoccupied boys engaged in wholesome activities. There are several women's clubs in the city and they discuss problems of boy life, but not one of them has yet done anything constructively to solve the problems.

The Boy Scout movement has been started in this city, but the membership is comprised almost entirely of the more fortunate boys. Those who organized the Boy Scouts made an appeal to the so-called better families. The result has been that the very boys who should be members of the Boy Scout organization are not reached by it. The boys who are members of the Y. M. C. A. are members of the Boy Scouts; neither organization reaches those who most need its services.

There is a juvenile court in the city. The judge presiding over this court has frequently called attention to the need of breaking up the gangs that infest the city, but he has no authority to deal constructively with the problem. He cannot, or at least he says he cannot, act on any cases except those that are brought before him for trial.

So here is the situation in this particular city. The boys who need to be kept interested in legitimate ways are overlooked by the various agencies maintained at public expense or by contributions from citizens for the purpose of improving the health, the morals and the behavior of the people. If the readers of this volume should have surveys made in their respective cities they would probably find conditions much like those in the city described. What can be done to improve the situation? First of all, the school board should be given authority to look after the

welfare and behavior of all the children of school age in the city every day in the year. No other agency in the city is capable of solving the problems arising out of the lack of opportunities for the occupation and entertainment of the young, boys especially. The board of education should assume responsibility for the conduct of public play grounds. The board should be given funds which would make it possible to exhibit motion pictures throughout the year, either in the school buildings or in community theatres. A force of assistants should be employed during the summer months so that every boy in the city could be kept track of. There should not be a single boy in the city left to run at large without anyone looking after him.

Some of the money that now goes to organizations that provide comforts for the fortunate children of the city should go to the school board to be expended for the benefit of the less fortunate children. The various clubs and organizations in the typical city minister to those who are not greatly in need of their services.

Then those who contribute to the Y. M. C. A. should endeavor to have a rule established that no boy should be denied the advantages of the Y. M. C. A. because he cannot pay a fee. If a fee is insisted upon, it will inevitably exclude those who most need to be enrolled as members in the Y. M. C. A. Those who contribute funds to the

Y. M. C. A. might very well specify that they should be utilized to defray the expenses of boys who cannot pay fees. As the Y. M. C. A. is developing in many cities it provides gymnasium and other facilities for business men and restaurants for all the people of the city who can afford to pay a fair price, and it results often that little or nothing is done for those who are economically at the bottom of the scale.

One thing is certain—in the long run the morals of a city will depend very largely upon the way in which the less fortunate young people of the city are cared for. If they are left to find their own occupation and entertainment they will develop rowdyism, thievery and indifference, and even hostility to law and order.

CHAPTER VI

DULLNESS

Mrs. A. R. T. of Pennsylvania has a son fourteen years of age. He has not been getting along well in school. He was required to spend two years in the fourth grade. He is now in the sixth grade and his teacher says he should spend another year there. He is large physically and loves to work with his hands. When school is out in summer he enjoys working all day on a farm. He is better in health and happier working out-of-doors than studying in school. His teachers think he is lazy and careless, and they scold him a good deal. His mother says they do not understand him, and on account of their hostility to him he is unable to do good work. She now asks whether he had best spend another year in the sixth grade.

The chances are that this boy, or any boy like him, would be injured by spending two years in the sixth grade. The boy would be humiliated for one thing; and more serious still, he would not have the incentive to put forth his best efforts. He would be more or less antagonistic all the time to-

ward his teacher and everything in the school program. He would be associated with children considerably smaller than himself, and this would either develop hostility and meanness, or it would take the spirit and vigor out of the boy. What he would gain in knowledge from the study of books would be far out-balanced by what he would lose in temperament, in spirit, and in habits of industry and application.

A boy entering the teens should emulate persons who are somewhat above and beyond him. He needs to look forward and upward rather than backward and downward. He needs inspiration, that is to say, but he cannot secure it by associating with children who are younger, and especially who are much smaller than he is himself. A fourteen- or fifteen-year-old boy is in a sensitive period. His voice and features are changing rapidly; new impulses are coming into his life, and he is self-conscious. He dislikes to be classified with younger and smaller children than he is himself. A normal boy will be in a resistant attitude all the time under such conditions; he will not do his work with enthusiasm; he will not develop friendly or cordial relations toward his work or his teachers or classmates. When he needs exhilaration he will be left neutral or even depressed. There is nothing good to be said for holding a boy back at this critical period if he can by any possibility go forward.

What should be done for him if he cannot move on into a higher grade? He should be taken out of school altogether and put into practical work for a year or two. He will gain just as much intellectually working on a farm or in a store or at a trade, as he will in spending his time in school when he is disinterested, or hostile to everything about him. He will develop better habits at work than he will in a school which he dislikes, and in which he feels humiliated. Often a boy approaching fifteen, who appears to be normal in every way but who is not getting on well in school, is a motor type who needs to work with his muscles. He will be happier and in a much better attitude toward people when he is engaged in work he likes than when he is studying in a school which he hates.

This boy ought to be given an opportunity to go to a vocational school. The reports of superintendents of schools in different sections of the country, and investigations made by students of education, show that frequently pupils who had been failing in book work in school have led their group when put into vocational work.

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CHAPTER VII

BACKWARDNESS

The teacher who does not have at least one backward pupil is lucky. Often one must listen to the complaints of teachers most of whose children are dull. And what do those who use the term "dull" to describe a child mean by it? A number of teachers have been asked this question, and most of them have said that their backward pupils are not dull in everything, but only in certain subjects, though occasionally a child seems to be stupid in every subject. It is rare, though, that a pupil who has been permitted to remain in school for four or five years is deficient in everything. Of course, a feeble-minded child cannot make headway in any kind of work, but such children are ordinarily sifted out of the school within two or three years after they have entered it.

The first thing to be said about the dull pupil is that if he could be tested in respect to all his abilities, and particularly his motor powers, he probably would not be found to be deficient in every respect. It sometimes happens that a pupil who is dull in language is superior in manual

work. Certainly some dullards in grammar are motor types, whose abilities are excellent in concrete situations demanding judgment and skill in manual activities.

For illustration we may glance at the record made by two brothers in their school work. The younger had pushed ahead of the older one in linguistic and historical studies in the high school. The older boy has had trouble always with these subjects because he cannot remember unfamiliar and abstract terms. But when it comes to fixing a clock which has got out of order or devising an elaborate scheme for illuminating a Christmas tree, or repairing any piece of apparatus used on the premises, either in the house or outside, the older boy is so vastly superior to the younger one that they cannot be considered in the same class at all. The older boy has been completely put out by a grammatical problem which the younger boy could solve to the satisfaction of the teacher. But the younger boy has been unable to fix a lawnmower, while the older boy would at once see what was the difficulty with it, and work at it until he could make it right again. Now, a mowing machine is a good deal more complicated than any grammatical sentence, and it demands a more alert type of mental ability to see what is wrong with it when it will not run right than to see what is the matter with a sentence and straighten it out; and yet the teacher of grammar calls the older

boy dull and the younger boy brilliant. One familiar with the schools knows that such cases are common.

Again the older boy has much trouble in remembering the rules and formulae in physics. His instructor follows the plan of having a lesson first learned and recited upon, and then there are laboratory exercises to illustrate and apply the principles developed. The older boy makes a poor showing in the recitation, but he is easily first in the laboratory work. And what is more significant, when he has once carried through an experiment, he never forgets the principle involved, and he can state it without difficulty; but he cannot learn the principle by heart. It is as though his mind refuses to retain what he has tried to learn unless his hands are brought into the process in some way. But it is just the other way with the younger boy. He would rather not do any work which requires the use of the hands; and he can learn and likes to learn rules by heart and reproduce without error.

Out in the world the younger boy would be called dull, and the older one capable and intelligent; but in the school they change about. Fortunately, some schools are now being equipped so that the abilities of both these types of boys can be utilized, though in the majority of schools still the boy who cannot learn verbal descriptions and retain them will impress the teacher as being a dullard.

Is a pupil ever dull when if he would make the proper effort he could do his work as well as his fellows? Here is a case that will illustrate the principle involved. K. D. is now fifteen years of age. In his school work he is three years behind his age. He has the physical strength of an ox almost, and has never been known to be sick. He is a leader among the boys with whom he associates. He is the most brilliant conversationalist of his group; he is keen, alert, decisive and dynamic. And yet he is three years retarded in school. Tests for measuring intelligence indicate that he is not defective mentally. His mental age is at least as high as his physical age. What then is the matter with him? He started wrong. He got into the way of thinking that the school was a rather stupid place, and he never acquired any interest in it. From the beginning he was more or less of a bully, and his parents let him have his own way. When he entered school, he thought he could continue to have his own way, and he actually did have it more or less from the time he entered school until now when he is trying to complete the eighth grade.

This will explain why he has not got on faster. He has not applied himself in the proper way. He has never decided definitely whether he ought to do the work of the school, or devote himself instead to the things of the street, moving-picture shows, the dance hall, the playground, and so on.

The school has never quite got hold of him, and so it has not made the proper appeal to his intelligence and energy. His mind has been in a kind of resistant attitude toward the school, and so of course he could not master his studies; but if he had really exerted himself, he could to-day have been in the junior year in the high school. This boy is called backward, but his backwardness is not due to any native deficiency. It is due to bad home and school training. If at the right time he had been influenced by persons of force and decision, he would probably have forsaken the distractions of the world and applied himself much more fully than he has done to the things of the school.

There are some persons who say that nature never makes a dullard; he is always made by those who are charged with his upbringing. This is absurd. Nature does not equip everyone with energy enough nor with sufficient concentration to do the work of a modern school. We teachers are undoubtedly responsible for a considerable proportion of those who appear to be stupid, but we cannot be charged with responsibility for all of them. For some reason nature fails to endow some children with a nervous system capable of bearing the strain of a present-day school, and such children are the true dullards. They can never be made normal in their mental work, and it is not fair to the teacher or to other pupils to have these

defectives taking the time and attention of the teacher. Fortunately the proportion of such children is very small, and one would not expect to find many of them in the typical school.

CHAPTER VIII

NON-RETENTIVENESS

A teacher who is trying to teach a twelve-year-old boy says that "he cannot remember anything." He may learn ten words in spelling to-day and forget them to-morrow. He is worst of all in history. He cannot remember when any important events happened. The teacher would like to know what she can do to improve the boy's memory.

A considerable proportion of children do not learn to spell readily. They cannot remember a series of letters in the definite order in which they occur in words. There are cases on record of men who could never learn to spell difficult words accurately. But most poor spellers could be helped if they were properly taught in the earlier years. The majority of parents teach a child his spelling by requiring him to memorize a number of words at each lesson by saying them over silently to himself or aloud. In recitation the child is required to spell the words orally.

Now, some children are eye-minded; that is to say, they learn through the eye much more readily than they do through the ear. Other children are

ear-minded; they depend upon the ear in learning much more than they do upon the eye. But the majority of children are eye-minded. If a pupil is eye-minded and he is required to learn his spelling by reciting words orally he will not do as well as if he should write the words as well as spell them aloud.

Every pupil, whether eye- or ear-minded, should be required to write words in his spelling because he will later need to use them in writing. Hardly ever will he be required to spell words orally after he leaves school. But it is particularly important that the eye-minded type should write words instead of spending all his time in going over them orally, though there will be some advantage in an oral recitation even for an eye-minded pupil. But he should put more emphasis on written than on oral spelling, that's the point.

Some pupils have a mental trait which leads them to overlook certain parts of words. Take for instance the word *manicurist*. They may remember the first part of it and the last part of it and this may be enough for them to recognize it in reading; but when they come to spell it they do not know what the middle part looks like and so they may depend upon the sound of it. But the sound does not reveal the fact that the middle vowel is an *i*. It sounds more like an *e*, and so the pupil who has not fixed the correct form clearly in mind will misspell the word. Most misspelling occurs in the

middle parts of words. A teacher should examine the errors of a child she is teaching, and if she finds them mostly in a certain part of misspelled words she should adopt a method which will require the child to study this part of each new word. She must underline the part of the word which gives most trouble or have it written in red ink which will attract the attention; or in some way she must differentiate the crucial part of each new word from the rest of it so that the pupil will give it special attention and fix it in his mind either in a visual image or in an auditory image or in both.

Experiments are made in psychological laboratories showing that persons differ in the readiness with which they can gain impressions. They also differ in their capacity to retain impressions and recall them. One person may be able to reproduce seven or eight digits when they are pronounced rapidly to him. He may recall them several days after they were given him. Another person of the same age may not be able to recall six digits when they are pronounced to him, and he may not be able to recite them correctly ten minutes after they were given. Now, teach these two types of children spelling and one will learn more readily than the other and be more accurate. The difference between them is a natural difference, and cannot be wholly overcome by any method of teaching. The one who does not gain impressions as readily or recall them as accurately as the other will need

to study words longer and he should have more frequent experience in reproducing them so that they will become established in memory.

As for a poor memory in history; choose at random a hundred children from eight years of age up to the teens. The majority of them will have difficulty in remembering dates in history unless these dates are associated in their minds with interesting events or personalities. Detached dates cannot be remembered except by rare individuals. Nature has not constructed the mind so that it can retain isolated, unrelated, insignificant and unimportant materials. Mere dates have no value to anyone but the specialist. They cannot be retained unless they are connected up intimately with matters which do have meaning and value and so which can be more easily remembered.

The typical teacher instructing a child in history is likely to emphasize the mere framework of history. The tradition prevails that history means mostly dates and names of persons and places. This is the chief reason why children have difficulty in remembering what they are required to remember. It is also the reason why there is so little interest taken by children in history. The typical child up to and even through the teens dislikes text-book history because it is "dead stuff" which he tries to fix in mind by continued repetition, and he usually fails even after prolonged drill.

Any person who will teach history as a continuous story in which interesting men and women come and play their parts and go their several ways, and great events transpire and the whole is a moving-picture,—when history is taught as a story of human life it is not difficult for children to remember and whether they care anything teacher sees that his children are forgetting all that he is teaching them in history he would better look pretty carefully to what he is expecting them to remember and whether they care anything about it.

CHAPTER IX

LINGUISTIC DEFICIENCY

For several years the writer has had opportunity to make an intimate study of the abilities of two brothers. Both of them are now pupils in the high school. The older boy has led all his classmates in manual activities; and he is equal to the best of them in science and mathematics. But he has had no end of trouble with language, English grammar, and a foreign language. He failed to complete satisfactorily a course in German last year, though he stood high in all his other studies. He was diligent and apparently earnest in trying to acquire his German, but still he could not master it. He is thoroughly interested in any activity which requires the use of his hands. He will willingly and gracefully perform any manual task which his parents may set him, and they can depend upon him to do it intelligently and faithfully. And yet, when his teachers assign a lesson in any linguistic subject, the boy is almost certain to do poorly in it; and they think he is "indifferent" or "careless" or even "lazy."

The younger boy has gone forward rapidly in

all his studies. He has had no trouble whatever with any linguistic subject. He has shown no skill in manual activities, however. While his older brother is working with the machinery about the place, or playing baseball, or engaged in some other physical activity, the younger boy is reading in-doors. The chief difficulty in dealing with him is to induce him to take exercise enough. He does not like to do errands, and he does not possess any such degree of mechanical ability as his older brother does. And yet he is taking the lead in studies involving the memorizing of words and the learning of linguistic material.

It is interesting to listen to these two boys discuss the work which they are doing in school. The older boy will hesitate for terms to describe what he appears to understand very well. He cannot readily recall a new term which he has encountered in any of his studies. He will dodge all new and strange words. He will speak of "that thing we learned to-day," or "I know but forgot what you call it" and so on. If it is anything he can represent by drawing or gesture, he can do it quite well; but he must struggle with the verbal terms necessary accurately and adequately to describe a new experience.

His younger brother, on the other hand, ordinarily does not hesitate for words to describe his experience. He remembers new terms readily, and he can use them precisely and definitely. He

does not resort to drawing or gesture so largely as does his older brother, but instead he generally relies upon the use of words alone to convey his ideas. He does not often employ such indefinite phrases as "that thing" or "whatever you call it" and so on.

The older boy was left-handed in his early years; but his teachers insisted upon his learning to write with his right hand. They constantly urged him, also, to use his right hand in working with tools, and so on. As a result of this, he is ambidextrous. It is probable that this has a bearing upon his linguistic deficiency. It seems to have been shown that nature did not intend an individual should use both hands equally well. She apparently designed that one should be either left-sided or right-sided, which means that he should develop one hemisphere of the brain beyond the other. Normally and apparently the left hemisphere should be developed more than the right; but if nature, by accident or birth, makes an individual's right hemisphere dominant over the left, it is probable that she intended he should use the left hand and the left foot more actively and vigorously than the right hand and right foot.

It is a significant fact that those who train imbecile children with speech defects aim to have them write a good deal either with the left or the right hand, according to their natural inclination. Doubtless all readers of these lines know that in

the brain the center that controls the right hand lies adjacent to the center that controls speech; and it may be that they develop in more or less close dependence upon one another, so that if the right-hand center is exercised and develops, it is probable that this will have a beneficial influence upon the speech center, quickening it in its development. And it is probable also that the more highly developed the right-hand center, the more completely will the speech center be developed. Further, it is likely that the development of the speech center reacts upon the center in the brain concerned with reading, and possibly also upon the center involved in hearing language. The four language centers,—hearing language, reading language, writing, and speaking,—are evidently quite closely associated, so that what affects one center will to a greater or less extent affect the others. Conversely, whatever retards the development of one language center will undoubtedly exert a retarding effect upon the other centers. And since speech was the earliest of the language processes to be differentiated in racial evolution, it probably exercises larger influence upon the others than they do upon it. It is practically certain that if speech be retarded, all the other processes will be affected unfavorably, while if it be developed normally and fully, the other language centers will probably be beneficially stimulated.

What should be done with a pupil who appears

to be defective in linguistic ability, but who is normal in other respects? The answer to this question is in a way simple. For such a pupil the words that he learns must be impressed by longer exposure than would be required for other individuals, and every device must be made use of to get an unfamiliar word clearly before the individual's attention. He must *pronounce* it distinctly. He must *write* it. He must have an abundance of concrete illustrations so that he will grasp its meaning. In other words, he must stay with the new word until the resistant language centers are compelled to receive and retain it, so to speak. With a pupil who is gifted in the mastery of language, a brief exposure might be enough to impress a new word so that he would be able to employ it in any way in which it might be necessary to use it, but it is different with the individual who is below par in linguistic sensitiveness and ease of execution.

The pupil who is deficient in the gaining of words, alike in respect to their vocal, visual and auditory form and their meaning, must be aided to bring each new term very clearly into his attention, and it must be kept there by requiring him to use it in various ways until the language centers get adjusted to it, as it were. In this manner he may make progress in learning language, whether native or foreign, whereas if some special attention is not given him, he may go along acquiring

only very general and insecure impressions, so that everything is left in a more or less confused and indefinite condition in his mind, and he will fall far behind his more fortunate companions.

CHAPTER X

BORN SHORT

During the past five years a number of cities in our country have employed specialists to make a careful examination of children who have given trouble in the public schools through backwardness or waywardness. It has been the purpose to find causes, and if possible, remedies. This investigation has already yielded a large amount of interesting and valuable material which will be helpful to parents, teachers, and all who have charge of the training of the young.

It has been shown conclusively that some children find their way into the public schools who are not capable of doing the work there simply because they are born short. For some reason, which we do not yet understand, such children develop very slowly, and they may never become fully matured. In some cases they stop mental growth completely very early. It is as though nature grows weary, and cannot go to the end of the journey. In the case of permanent backwardness, it is probable that the brain is arrested in its growth. And what is the cause of this tragedy?

In most cases of permanent intellectual difficulty, the cause is traceable to heredity extending back through one or more generations. Or it may be due to alcoholism or the habitual use of some nerve disintegrating drug like cocaine or morphine.

Professor Hodge has been able to produce mental and physical degenerates in alcoholized dogs in a single generation. He has taken perfectly healthy parents with excellent heredity; he has fed them alcohol in the form of whiskey or some other intoxicant so that he has kept them partially drunk for a considerable period. Then if they have offspring, the chances are that they will be degenerates in body and mind. This means simply that they cannot develop normally.

It is probably the same way in human life. Alcoholism in the parents is undoubtedly the cause of the larger proportion of permanently backward children who have tried the public schools and who have failed. Such children are a drag on the school system of an entire community. They dissipate the teacher's energy, and develop habits of inattention and distraction in normal pupils. Any community which permits such children to remain in the schools destroys to some extent the efficiency of educational work for all the children of the community.

What can be done with such children? They will be a greater menace to the welfare of a community if they are turned onto the streets than if they are

kept in the schools. They must be cared for in some way.

The only effective way to care for them is to have special schools for them, or at least special rooms in each school building. It is probable that in every school of, say, four hundred, there will be a sufficient number of handicapped children to make a special class. Some parents would probably object to having their children put in this special class, but it will really be better for the children themselves, and it is absolutely necessary for the welfare of the school. A child who is two or three years behind his proper grade, who is much larger physically but slower mentally than his classmates is certain to be an object of ridicule and sarcasm; and few children can be under this sort of thing very long without having their dispositions ruined.

A child who is handicapped in any way ought not to be placed in a situation where he will be laughed at by his mates or pointed at as if he were a peculiar object. Such treatment will aggravate natural deficiencies. Moreover, a pupil who is working with children much smaller and younger than he is will not be stimulated to do his best. This would be the worst possible way to treat the handicapped individual.

A teacher must possess special qualifications in order to teach backward children effectively. She must have extraordinary patience. She must have

much clearer insight into the workings of the dull mind than most people possess. She must have firmness and power of command joined with sympathy and a forgiving disposition. Anyone who does not possess these traits but who has to teach backward children will be in hot water constantly; and life will be intolerable for her pupils.

In a city of considerable size, the backward boys ought to be separated from the backward girls. Men should always be employed to teach the former. Often a boy handicapped by nature will overcome his limitations to a considerable extent by heroic efforts, if he is taught by a vigorous, masterful man. Boys of this kind always admire masculinity. They will try to emulate a man who has made a good record as an athlete, and they will do their best to comply with his commands. There are plenty of cases on record of boys who have been from two to four years retarded in public schools, but who braced up and did their work fairly well when they were put in a special school under a strong man. Such boys always have to be given a generous amount of hand work in order to awaken their interest and to arouse their minds. Such work can be provided easily in special classes.

CHAPTER XI

NERVOUSNESS

Cases like the one described below are frequently seen in schools:

“My boy aged seven is attending his second year of school and is very nervous. His condition seems aggravated during school attendance. He has had two operations for adenoids. He was to have had his tonsils removed (they are not diseased but enlarged) when he took measles. When the date was again set for operation the specialist found the blood too thin and advised us to wait for cold weather. In the meantime the dentist began to straighten his teeth with an arch. The child is of a fearsome nature, and needs pushing to do those things he is not accustomed to do. In his school work he was ‘short’ in reading and slow in arithmetic. I had him take private lessons in reading during vacation, thinking it would give him more confidence. Ought I to push him, or keep him home altogether from school? The child is afraid at times in the dark since he was six years old. Formerly he never showed fear in this respect.”

This boy ought not to be pushed in work which he does not like to do. He is evidently below par physically. He has had two operations for adenoids, and he has enlarged tonsils, and he is having his teeth straightened; he must be under a good deal of nervous strain. He probably had to have an anesthetic for the operations on the adenoids. It sometimes requires a considerable period for the ether to be completely eliminated from the system. It poisons some persons, especially children, and they show the effects for weeks and even months after an operation. Then straightening teeth is apt to interfere with mastication of food; and when the bar or arch is tightened there is likely to be constant pain. These experiences will probably account for the nervousness of this boy. If the tonsils are still very large, so that he does not breathe freely, and if at night he breathes through the mouth or is restless, he could not be anything else than nervous.

He has been afraid in the dark since his sixth year. The majority of children have fear of the dark, even if nothing is said to them about creatures that may do them harm in the dark; but they soon outgrow the fear if they develop normally. One should not attach much importance to the boy's fear, although the fact that it developed since the sixth year indicates that the nervous strain began somewhere about that time. The more a child is depleted nervously, the more likely

he is to be afraid, and the longer fears will persist. The best way to relieve a child of fears is to keep him in good nervous health, and the next best way is to say nothing to him about fear of any kind. One should not talk to him about being courageous, either, because this suggests fear. Simply have him go ahead doing things in which he is interested, and do not let the subject of fear enter into his life if it can be avoided.

If a nervous boy would be contented at home, if he could be kept engaged in work with his hands, and especially if he could be out-of-doors a good deal so that he would gain in physical vigor and his nervous condition would be improved, he should be taken out of school. But it often happens that children who are out of school are not as happy as they would be in school. They have little or nothing to do that interests them, and they are apt to be in the way in the house, so that there is considerable irritation developed. When this would be the case with any child, it would be better for him to be in school than to be taken out.

It should be arranged so that such a child could do part of the work of the school during the regular session and leave some to be completed during the summer. A child would be better off doing work two hours in the summer in the morning than he would be to be idle all the time. He could easily make up a half year's work by private instruction in the summer. In this way he might be able to

build up his physical condition and still not lose contact with the school altogether.

But if he does not like to go to school, if he is timid, if he does not sleep well when he is in school, if he comes home at night and cries on slight pretext, if he has dark rings underneath his eyes and his appetite is freakish, then it would be better to have him out of school altogether.

CHAPTER XII

RESTLESSNESS

A teacher who has been wrestling with the boy problem asks:

"Is there any way to induce boys to be quiet with books, and especially with their feet? My pupils are all boys but seven, and at times the shuffling is almost unendurable. Mention of it often seems to aggravate the evil; and yet it causes a loss of time if not prevented somehow."

Nature did not intend that boys should sit four or five or six hours in a schoolroom. After a boy of any age up to the teens has sat in a seat for twenty or thirty minutes he will be restless and noisy. If he has a book or slate or ruler in his hands he will be likely to make a racket with it. He may not intend to create a disturbance; he simply gives way to his restlessness. When a boy, or any one else for that matter, has been in a restrained position for a half hour, say, he is inclined to move around in order to release the muscular tensions which have been developed. One can observe this trait among people even in a church where they usually try to repress all restlessness; after they have been seated for a

half hour they are likely to become restless and to move about a good deal in their seats.

There is one way to cure school-room restlessness and the noise that arises from it. Have frequent relaxing periods. Give young pupils opportunities to indulge in unrestrained physical activity for a few moments after every thirty minutes of study or recitation. Let it be understood that if they continue to be restless and noisy after these intermissions, they may have to get along without any rest periods since they do not show any benefit from them. This will help them to control their restlessness, though it will be impossible to check it if there are no intervals for relaxation during the day, except one recess in the middle of the forenoon and another in the middle of the afternoon.

But even with frequent breaks in the day's work, there will probably be some shuffling of feet and slamming of books in the typical classroom where a large proportion of the pupils are boys. It is impossible wholly to prevent motor activity among pupils who possess the normal amount of vitality. A teacher must make up his mind to endure considerable noise in the schoolroom even under the most favorable conditions. He must think of it as a necessary accompaniment to growth, and that it does not spring out of meanness. Compared with a mature person an immature one always lacks restraint and poise and

composure, and he is not sensitive to disorder which would distress an adult.

In some homes and schools boys are required to take off their heavy shoes when they come in from out-of-doors and put on soft footwear. This is of immense service in reducing noise in the home and the schoolroom. Slippers suggest quiet and composure to boys. When one wears heavy, coarse boots he is not encouraged in any degree to conduct himself quietly either in the home or in the school.

The worst mistake a teacher or parent can make is to become noisy himself when trying to control noise made by others. When a teacher loses his patience on account of the restlessness of his pupils his voice is apt to become harsh, he will talk in a higher key than usual and by his manner he will incite restlessness. A teacher or parent might derive valuable suggestion from observing an experienced orator subdue a restless audience. When he notices that his hearers are becoming uneasy, he becomes the more composed on this account. He may remain perfectly quiet for a few moments. One can observe that his composure spreads quickly throughout the audience, without anyone knowing quite why. People cannot explain why they yawn when they are in the presence of others who set the example. In the same way we laugh and weep and do other things as a matter of suggestion; and this

great principle of human nature should be a guide to one who seeks to control a noisy school or home.

Are girls as noisy as boys? An Illinois teacher writes:

"Some of the teachers in the upper grades and in the high school in our small city say that the girls give them as much trouble as the boys on account of their noisy, restless manner in school. But it seems to be different in the fourth grade in which I teach. The girls keep a good deal quieter than the boys. Is the situation in my classroom typical or is it exceptional?"

Speaking generally, a boy's motor tendencies are stronger and more insistent than those of a girl, at least after the age of four or five. Nature probably designed that a boy should be more active in a muscular way than a girl; as a rule the male members of any species, human or animal, are more muscular and dynamic than the female members. Boys have more energy that needs to be expressed in motor activity than girls have; and after the age of six or seven boys are noisier than girls, allowing for occasional exceptions. The typical boy more than the typical girl moves around a good deal without knowing that he is doing it. Even at a table he will perform all manner of gymnastics on his chair though his parents may urge him incessantly to restrain himself. He will knock his shoes against the legs of the chair or crack the shins of the people next

to him, always unaware that he is not sitting quietly like the others at the table. The point is that with the normal boy surplus energy is being generated constantly and this seeks an outlet spontaneously through muscular action. If some purposeful tasks are being performed, then the sporadic actions will disappear; but the moment the purposeful activities cease, the sporadic actions will appear.

CHAPTER XIII

TIMIDITY

Ruth is nine years old. She has always dreaded to be left in the house without father or mother, especially in the evening. Her parents think she is "finicky," and is not really afraid. They frequently leave her alone, though she protests vigorously, and is in tears when they go, even when there are several older persons in the house. If she hears her mother say at noon that there will be a meeting in the evening which she must attend, Ruth begins worrying and will keep asking all the afternoon whether it is necessary for the mother to go, whether Daddy will remain in the house, how long she will be gone, and so on. If she learns in the morning that there is a chance of her being left without father or mother in the evening, she will enjoy nothing during the entire day.

The mother thinks this is simply a "notion" on Ruth's part. "Why," she inquires, "should the child be so peculiar? She has never been injured or frightened in the house, and I always see that there is someone to stay with her, either

the maid or a neighbor who will come in, when I must be away." The mother is not very sympathetic with Ruth in this matter. She gives the girl no comfort when the latter asks how long she will be out in the evening, whether there is any likelihood of her being delayed, and so on. The mother usually replies: "I cannot tell you when I will be back. What is the use of your asking me anyway? You can go to sleep. I cannot tell when the party will break up, and it is foolish of you to ask anyway. I wish you would not ask me these questions."

Ruth is a very sensitive child in many ways. She cannot endure to have anybody speak about the bones of the body or operations or sores. She actually shudders when she hears people talking about blood.

She is also "finicky" about her food. There are only a limited number of articles she will eat. She is fond of sweets, and she will sacrifice everything to secure candy and gum. She will not touch meat if there is any fat in it. She will not even look at an egg, and she cannot tolerate milk. So it can be seen that she is unduly sensitive, and this is the cause of her timidity. Nervous instability or undue excitability is at the bottom of many children's persistent fears.

Ruth's parents treat her timidity as they would treat obstinacy. They try to banish it by censure or punishment in one form or another. But

obstinacy and fear are diametrically opposite mental states. Obstinacy can sometimes be softened by penalties, for it is to some extent under the control of the will; when one discovers that the results of obstinacy are unfortunate for himself, he will be likely to take another tack.

But it is just the reverse with fear. To illustrate: let a person be frightened by burglars a few times on entering his house at night, and it is a safe guess that he will thereafter always dread to enter it at night. So let a child suffer from terror frequently for many years because she is left alone, and the chances are she will suffer from this cause more and more as she grows older. Everyone should know that the oftener a child is made afraid the more readily he will be overtaken by fear, just as the oftener a freshet flows over a given course, the deeper the course will become and the easier the water will flow along it. Any motion like anger, fear, and the like, when often experienced, attunes the vital organs in a characteristic way until these come to be shaped by the emotion, and in time they will express it habitually.

How can timidity in a child be eradicated? First of all, by building up the general health. Those who are in fine physical condition are less likely to be troubled by fears than those who are in a weakened condition. The timid person feels that he is not resourceful, and that if trouble

comes he cannot meet it. He always feels dependent, helpless. While Ruth has a good physique, she still is so high-strung nervously that she cannot meet new experiences calmly and confidently; she cannot go away from home anywhere, even to church or to a new teacher or to the movies, without father or mother. Fortunately, she has been much out-of-doors, and has had a good physical life or else her timidity would have told heavily on her before this.

A timid child like Ruth should not be allowed to anticipate danger. When she asks her mother at noon: "You are not going out to-night, are you?" the mother must give her assurance at once that all will be well. Even if the mother knows she is going out, she should be ready with some plan which will at once give the child confidence and allay her dread. If the mother is irritated by the girl's questions and impatient because of her unreasonable attitude, she will only aggravate the evil. This is actually what has happened in Ruth's case, and is one cause for her present almost morbid dread that she will be left alone. The parents must be patient with her in her frailty; she cannot help it. She must never be scolded or chided because she cannot be brave and independent; she must be *educated* not censured; and her education must consist in giving her so many experiences in which there is no element of fear that gradually her life will

become suffused with *confident* instead of *dread* anticipations. It will not do much good to attempt to argue a child like Ruth out of her fears, trying to show her that no harm can come to her if she goes to Sunday school, say, without father or mother. A child's fears are irrational and largely beyond the control of intellect and will. Timidity can be dislodged only by being crowded out or allowed to die out; it cannot be reasoned away.

Physicians are to-day explaining many cases of mental strain and stress in maturity as due to terror in earlier years. Children who are frightened may apparently overcome their fear, but if in maturity the nervous system becomes weakened, the earlier shock or dread may take possession of the individual, though he may have forgotten the specific origin of it. The nervous system tends to retain deep impressions made upon it, especially experiences with fear. Though fear reactions in the past may be kept temporarily out of consciousness, still they are likely to persist in subconsciousness and become integrated with the individual's whole emotional life and always be a handicap to him.

The chief thing in dealing with childish fears and all forms of timidity is to gain the child's confidence, and keep him from worrying about the object or event he dreads. If he is afraid in the dark, for instance, he should have agreeable

experiences in the dark which will take his mind off from the original source of dread. He cannot be cured of his fear of the dark if he be kept away from it altogether, or by never venturing out in the dark; but at the same time he cannot overcome it by being made afraid in the dark or by being compelled to go to bed every night in a dark room when he cries from terror.

There is another aspect of timidity which is quite perplexing and distressing to parents and teachers. It relates to diffidence before strangers which frequently prevents a child from helping to entertain guests. One often notices the irritation and distress of a parent who asks a child to recite or sing or play on the piano or violin for the entertainment of friends, and the child declines to do so. Frequently the parent thinks the child refuses because he is obstinate or is not willing to do his part to make it pleasant for the guests. In nine cases out of ten, though, the child's refusal is due to shyness. Most persons, young or old, are self-conscious and embarrassed when they appear before strangers, or even acquaintances, in the rôle of entertainer. Some parents who censure a child because he will not play or sing or dance or recite could not themselves be induced to perform in these ways. They could not be coerced into making an after-dinner speech, even, which is perhaps the least embarrassing of the ordinary forms of entertainment;

they will make up all sorts of excuses and persist in them when they are called upon to perform.

It is instinctive for a child to avoid formal occasions when the eyes of the crowd are fixed on him, and he is responsible for the entertainment of a company. Many persons can not outgrow this timidity by any kind of training, though they may love to "show off" before their intimate friends. Some persons suffer from stage fright no matter how often they attempt to speak or entertain in a more or less formal way. This is due in some cases to a nervous sensitiveness which can never be entirely overcome. It is due in other cases to having been frightened on earlier occasions and the fear can not be wholly eradicated. Fear of this kind tends to persist longer than any other variety, although it seems unreasonable and is a serious handicap.

A child can often be helped to overcome his shyness in appearing in the rôle of entertainer if from an early age he participates in dramatics. The thing to be accomplished is to aid him to get over being unduly conscious of self whenever he attempts to play a part. He is less likely to be overwhelmed with the task of entertaining if others are coöperating with him than if the responsibility falls wholly on himself; and the more often he plays a part and goes through with it successfully, the more completely the character he portrays will take possession of him

and keep him from thinking about himself. When a person can give his thought wholly to any task to be performed he will not be timid and self-conscious.

A parent or teacher ought to know in an individual case whether or not a child declines to perform because he is afraid. If he is timid he should not be urged unduly. But if he refuses because he has no interest in helping to entertain guests, then pressure might well be applied to him, though not when strangers are present. A parent or teacher should not keep requesting an unwilling child to play or to speak or to do anything else in the presence of guests. When the guests are gone the parent or teacher may make the child realize how selfish he is, and may deny him privileges simply because he is selfish. If he will not help to make it agreeable for others, then others will not make it agreeable for him. After the age of seven or eight a child can be led to appreciate that people are constantly sacrificing for him, and if he will not play the game fair, then he will have to shift for himself more largely than he has been doing.

It should be added, though, that, generally speaking, young children should not be called on to entertain mature guests. They should appear mainly before young persons of their own age. It will tend to make them blasé and give them a false estimate of their importance if they exhibit

due to fears experienced in childhood. Fear exerts a disrupting influence upon the nervous system; and when a child is frequently terrified he is likely never wholly to overcome the experience even when he is mature. When he is in good health he may not be troubled by a recurrence of the fear, but if he becomes overstrained or exhausted then it may take possession of him, not in precisely the same way in which it was originally experienced but as a sort of indefinite and undefinable dread that some disaster is impending. One sees adults who live in constant fear of imaginary evils that are about to descend upon them.

Mrs. B. says that, since her child had not shown any fear up to two-and-a-half years of age, she is unable to see why he should be afraid. But it is more often true than not that children become afraid in the dark and of various objects and situations after two years of age. A year-old child might not suffer from any fear in the dark; but without having had any frightful experience in it he might nevertheless become afraid in it at the age of two-and-a-half years. Different fears appear at different stages of development; just as in the case of a young bird which will allow human beings to approach it and feed it before it is ready for flight, but when its wings are developed and it has learned to use them it is terrified at the approach of human beings. The same principle is true of young rabbits or squirrels or other wild

creatures. They do not know what fear of human beings is in their earliest weeks but they develop this fear very intensely in the course of a few months.

Mrs. B. ought immediately to abandon the method she has been following in treating her boy when he cries on being put to bed. The more she scolds him or whips him and especially the more frequently she ties him in his crib, the more certainly the fear will fasten itself upon him so that he can never shake it off. He is apt to become a nervous wreck unless his mother follows a more sensible régime with him. The first thing for her to do is to give him assurance when he is put to bed that he will not be left alone. She should lie down on the bed beside him. The moment he begins to show that he is afraid she should console him. If he awakens during the night she must be near enough so she can respond to his call. She ought to make bed-time a pleasant time and not a dreadful time for him. She should tell him stories which he can understand, and play little games with him when he is put in his bed; and when he is quiet and shows in his expression that he is not apprehensive of harm she should turn the light low, take hold of his hand, and stay near him until he falls asleep. In this way he will gradually come to have confidence in the dark and he will outgrow his dread of going to bed. The writer has known children who from the age of four up to nine or ten years of age would

not consent to be left in the dark for a moment but who at twelve or thirteen had completely outgrown their fear.

The only way fear can be overcome is by developing confidence in its place. A child will outgrow the dread of going to bed if bed-time becomes associated with pleasant experiences,—stories, games and plays, the mother or father by the bedside as the child falls to sleep, and so on.

Every child comes into life burdened with more or less indefinite fears. Some of these will take possession of him at one or another stage of his development without anything having happened to arouse them. They simply appear in the process of development just as a wisdom tooth or a mustache does. It should be the first concern of parents to allay these fears and to do everything possible to divert the child's attention from the objects or situations that occasion them.

CHAPTER XV

COMMUNICATIVENESS

A child ought early to learn that there are certain sorts of happenings which should not be told to others, because people do not care to hear them, or will be offended by them, or because they relate to personal or domestic affairs which should be kept from the public gaze. The older the child grows the more restrained, or at least the more discriminating, he should become in his talk. This is particularly true in regard to the mishaps, the troubles, and even the aches and pains of his daily life. If he stubs his toe, or gets a sliver in his finger, or a mosquito bites him, or he receives a bump of some kind he should be made to feel that no one is interested in this and he should grin and bear it.

There are types of pupils who think they must run to the teacher with everything disagreeable that happens to them. Even if anyone on the playground scowls at them, in they run to the teacher complaining and asking for sympathy. They may run to the teacher with the most trivial complaints twenty times or more in the course of a day.

Such pupils are encouraged from infancy to tell all their troubles to teacher or parents. The adults about them make a great fuss over them, and so magnify their mishaps. As a consequence, the children acquire a habit which they cannot easily overcome; and their troubles become all the worse by making much ado about them. Not only this but they make it uncomfortable for those to whom they tell their misfortunes. One cannot share another's troubles without experiencing some of the victim's distress.

Images that relate to bodily conditions or functions tend to produce those conditions or functions. Pains are made more painful by concentrating the attention on them, or by imaging the condition of the part of the body that is the source of the pain. On the other hand, it is probably known to every reader that it is possible for one to become unconscious of painful conditions by keeping the attention concentrated upon an object or an idea unrelated to the pain. A person may be suffering intensely from toothache or headache or some other disturbance when he is called upon to give an address; but the occasion may be so important that he will concentrate his attention upon the subject he is discussing and upon the response of his audience, and he will become utterly oblivious of his pain. When he has finished his address the pain may be gone completely because the system has become so engrossed with matters having no

relation to it that the bodily conditions producing it have actually been changed.

Frequently painful conditions may be induced or intensified by keeping the attention fastened upon some slight irritation. The part affected becomes congested and in this way the disturbance becomes aggravated. Conversely, congestion may be reduced by turning the attention away from the part of the body that is causing trouble.

Children should be trained so that they will not habitually think or talk about their minor aches and ills and so that they will early learn to ignore most of the bodily disturbances of daily life. There is probably no ache or ill, no matter how serious, that would not be relieved to a greater or less extent if the individual would keep his attention off from it. It is frequently the case that a person imagines he is suffering pain, when he is really quite free from it, because of the impression that has been made upon the sense of sight by some injury he has sustained. Certain persons think they feel pain when they believe they have suffered a painful injury, even though the injury is purely imaginary. For instance, there are persons who if they receive a wound from which blood flows, imagine that they suffer pain when as a matter of fact the wound may be entirely painless. Such persons are likely to think they are being hurt and that they are suffering severe pain when they observe a surgeon performing an

operation upon them, though the surgeon may have rendered the part of the body being operated upon quite insensitive to pain. Soldiers often collapse when they are "shot" for typhoid fever or any other disease; but the hypodermic needle does not cause any more pain than the prick of a pin.

The point is that the majority of persons infer that they are suffering pain when they see anything on the body or look at anything occurring to the body which has the appearance of being painful. And when such persons recall a wound and dwell upon it they are likely to experience pain even though there is actually very little if any pain connected with it. The typical person ought not to dress the wounds he receives because when he does this he gets an image of the wound in mind and he cannot rid himself of it, with the result that he suffers constantly, when if he did not see the wound he might not suffer much pain. On the other hand, some persons have such control over their images that they can dress even an ugly looking wound and then go ahead and forget about it. They have such strong impersonal, objective interests that they can ignore even quite serious bodily disturbances; but this does not seem to be true of the majority of persons.

One way to develop physical troubles in people is to talk to them about toothache or stomachache or backache or indigestion or some other

kind of ache or ill. Probably the majority of persons are so constituted that they cannot listen to a description of heart irregularity, for instance, without thinking about the matter as it concerns themselves. They are likely to imagine that the description of diseases in others applies to themselves. Manufacturers of patent medicine understand this trait very well, and they take advantage of it. They send detailed symptom sheets to all the addresses they can secure and they know that a considerable proportion of those who read the description of a disease will imagine that they have some of the symptoms, and the more they dwell upon the matter the more certain they become that they are afflicted. Every doctor should know that he can develop in the typical patient symptoms of almost any bodily disturbance by asking him if he does not feel thus and so. Medical students who study diseases of the heart usually go through a period when they imagine that they, too, have heart disease. Teachers in medical institutions have as a part of their duties to prevent their students from becoming morbid in thinking that they have the diseases which they are studying in others.

The writer knows of homes in which a considerable part of the talk relates to the aches and ills of the members of the family. They begin at the breakfast table and tell in minutae about the internal or external pains which they experienced dur-

ing the night. Now, the more vividly any member describes his pains the more likely he is to develop them in those who listen to him. There should be a rule, implicit or expressed, in every household which would prevent the members from discoursing upon their bodily disturbances. Most of the minor aches and ills of life cannot be helped by talking to people about them. The cause of them cannot be located. They come and they go and they will depart faster if they are not made topics of conversation than if they are talked about.

Some reader may ask whether there would not be danger in teaching children to keep their aches and ills to themselves. Might not a serious derangement become chronic unless it were described by the one who is afflicted? The answer to this objection is that a parent or teacher should be able to detect from a child's appearance and actions when he is not well. The child himself might better not be thinking much about whether or not he is sick. The only exception to this is that a child who has fallen into unhealthful habits of eating or sleeping and so on should be made to realize that he will be handicapped unless he will change his habits. The typical person loses about one-fourth of his time because of unhygienic habits of living. A child who is just forming his habits should be helped to see the connection between loss of time from sickness and bad hygienic habits. However, if it is impossible to

change the habits it would be better for the child not to fall into the way of dwelling on his aches and ills. He can alleviate them best by endeavoring to keep his attention on things of a pleasanter nature, and if he will refrain from describing his afflictions to others he may be able to save them from experiences like his own.

CHAPTER XVI

VICE

A certain mother is greatly distressed because her eighteen-year-old boy is falling from grace. He has three sisters, all of whom are refined and well-behaved. They move in the best society in the community in which they live. Until he was sixteen the boy lived an exemplary life, but within one year he has changed completely according to his mother's testimony. His character is now just the opposite of what it was two or three years ago. "He has become dishonest and deceitful, and every bit of decency has left him."

One of the most insidious forms of mental degeneracy is found in playing with chance. Those who work in colleges and universities have to fight against this evil constantly. It has a subtle disintegrating effect upon the mind, but there is money in this for the men who conduct the business, and everywhere an appeal is made to the gambling impulses in the boy. It is safe to say that sooner or later an individual who indulges in the gaming instinct will go to the bad, intellectually and morally. Anyone who has studied the psychol-

ogy of this at Monte Carlo or Nice or Deadwood or Butte will realize what effect playing with chance has upon the individuals who give way to it.

There is still another possible explanation of a sudden and fundamental change in a boy's character. It may be due to bad heredity, which may first be manifested during the critical period from fifteen to eighteen. Sometimes inherited traits are concealed until this epoch, when they burst forth. This does not mean that any specific trait can be inherited; but it has been shown by Guyer, in his "Being Well Born," that an unstable organism may be inherited, and in periods of crisis in human life this instability may be manifested in one way or another. The particular degenerative traits which will appear in a boy of sixteen who is the heir of the sins of his fathers will depend upon the peculiar influences that play upon him at this time. He is simply a reed blowing in the wind.

Bad sex habits may be the cause of deterioration of character in a sixteen-year-old boy. Indulgence in this direction usually results in the lowering of vitality. It results also in a blunted sense of the proprieties of life. The roué generally loses his regard for ordinary decencies. While at one time he may have wished to secure the goodwill of his associates he will lose his ambition in this direction when he becomes an habitué of the Red Light district. Such persons become ethical,

moral, social degenerates. Their elemental passions take possession of them, and they live on a low physical plane. They become callous to requirements that other persons carefully observe.

Dissolute people scoff at the ordinary conventions of daily life. The common decencies have little or no value for them. Self-restraint is no longer a virtue in their eyes. It is as though they dropped from the upper realms of the soul into its lower depths, which are concerned with indulgence of the physical appetites mainly. The roué lives in a lower strata of his being, and body and mind are concerned mainly with animal indulgences. That is why he offends those who are sensitive to the rules of decent living.

If one cannot find the explanation of a sudden disintegration of a boy's character in his use of tobacco or gambling or in his association with habitués of the Red Light district, then a search should next be made for secret vice. Any practice which will seriously deplete one's energies, or which will violently shock the nervous system, will tend to reduce resistance to temptation. Indulgence of this sort will subtract from the energies which can go to the support of life on a high moral and social plane.

The "decencies of life" consist of the actions of those who have conserved their energies and who are expending them in social, ethical, and moral living. Now let any person expend his vitality on

a low physical plane, and he will drop back into a more primitive kind of life, when restraints as we now know them were not practiced. This is really what deterioration of character means—dropping backward and downward into a more physical kind of life. Unfortunately, the shocks and dissipations due to sex excesses and irregularities exert the most serious influence upon the stability and integrity of the nervous system; and remember that any experience which disturbs the nervous system weakens the will. In other words, it weakens character.

It is generally agreed that the chief danger to the boy is that he will give himself up to vice. The forces that lead him in this direction are the strongest in his being; and unfortunately he can hardly turn around in a modern city without having these impulses aroused. There is more money to be made in this sort of thing than in any other. If he goes to the theater, the chances are that from start to finish there will be subtle suggestion designed to influence his passions. This suggestion comes not only from the situations presented in the play, but also from the songs and dances. The billboards continue the effect of the theater; and most potent of all in arousing the boy's passions is the positive appeal made to him on the street by those who make their living thereby.

Recently a manager of a theater was criticised because of the suggestive plays which he pre-

subjected to constant suggestion of restraint, and positive ideals of chivalry and courtesy and high regard for the opposite sex.

It is the testimony of those who have made a critical study of the life of the typical rural school that vicious talk is common. Often pupils hardly realize that the talk is vicious. They hear such talk around their own homes. They do not hear much else around the barns and the fields. This is not true in every community, but it unfortunately is true in many of them in every section of the country. One frequently finds in the country that it is the tradition for men to engage in vulgar talk whenever they are together, and to tell vicious stories. It would be impossible for a boy in some rural communities to escape learning vicious talk and stories. Then when he goes to school he disseminates corruption among the innocent, if there are any such.

One can hear men who as boys heard vulgar speech and vicious stories say that they wish they could live their lives over again and avoid these experiences. Nine out of ten men will express sincere regret that in their earlier years they had to listen to vulgarity which is exceedingly offensive in maturity, but which tends to persist against all efforts to eradicate it. No one can possibly defend the practice of using vicious language and telling vicious stories to young persons.

Lewd talk and stories lower the whole moral

tone of any community. They not only tend to coarsen and animalize the thoughts and feelings of people, but they incite to lewd conduct. Every vicious story which is heard is an incentive to vicious action. It is not to be wondered at that boys and girls who have heard such talk should engage in the conduct which it suggests. The wonder is that they do not do so more freely and generally than they do. Every person of any sense, whether he be a psychologist or not, knows that conduct is nine-tenths suggestion, and the most subtle sort of suggestion comes through concrete stories depicting actual relations in human life. This is precisely the character of the vulgar story. Further, obscene stories and talk tend to break down the natural modesty which is a protection against lewd action. Once this safeguard is destroyed the individual becomes the creature of his animal impulses. This is the reason why every up-building agency in human life seeks to protect the natural modesty of people which prevents them from using vicious talk or listening to vicious stories.

But still more corrupting than the lewd talk and story is the lewd picture. You who are reading these lines, have you recently visited any rural school in your community? Have you observed the furniture and the walls of the schoolroom and the outbuilding? If so, you have probably observed the suggestive pictures which have been

carved by preceding generations of vicious-minded pupils. This lewd art has remained to exert its evil influence upon succeeding generations of pupils, and then a parent who sends her boys to this school may be distressed because their speech and their conduct soon become corrupted.

Can anything be done to improve the situation? Yes, much can be done about it. In the first place, evil suggestion can be eliminated from school buildings and the furniture and all the environments. Even the fences must be inspected; often they bear the marks of the lewd artist of past years. This is the first step to be taken. A parent who will not remedy this condition need expect nothing else than the corruption of her children. She ought not to complain about it either. It is about as certain as the law of gravitation that when children are bombarded with vicious suggestions they will respond to them sooner or later.

How can the people of a community who are indifferent in regard to these matters be aroused? But little can be accomplished by talking to them individually. They must be brought together in the school. Someone who knows how to do it must arouse them to the actual situation. He must have at hand real cases of vicious language and vicious conduct which he can lay before them. Someone who has grit and tact will have to tackle the job. He must go through to the end so as to get under their skins. He must have them make a

survey of the school furniture, buildings and environment, and let them see the sights which their children look upon constantly. It is difficult or impossible for a young girl teacher to do this, but if she happens to be in a school like that, what can she do? Call on the state rural-school inspector. He knows the situation. He can awaken those people unless they are beyond redemption. The girl teacher and often the man teacher, need to have their influence reinforced. The traditions in a community cannot be changed by those who are in the community, even by the teacher after the people become acquainted with him. Then the man from without can tell the people in the community what other communities are doing and how they have solved their problems. He can make these people ashamed of their lethargy and their indecency. The teacher can do something in this direction, but the task of arousing the community is so great that one teacher's voice is usually not strong enough, and his deeds are not potent enough.

A matter of this kind is so subtle and is so much an expression of the life of a community that it cannot be remedied without thorough renovating of the ideals of the community and of the school. Parents think that if teachers would talk to the pupils or punish them they could get rid of vicious talk and misconduct. This is foolish. The disease is deep-seated, and it never can be cured unless the

underlying causes are got at and eliminated. It is no task for a weakling, this cleansing of a rural school. The evil cannot be remedied within the school itself, either, though it can be greatly helped when the furniture and environments are made wholesome and attractive, and when a resourceful teacher can keep pupils occupied in decent ways, and can organize them on the playground so that they are always engaged in competitive games and plays.

But the school cannot keep the thought and action of pupils wholesome if the moment they leave the school grounds they are surrounded by vicious sights and sounds. This means that the community must be reached as well as the pupils. There should be a parent-teacher association and the situation should be made vivid to the members. It can be done; it has been done, and is being done. Every rural-school inspector and every rural department in a normal school has records of cases where schools and whole communities have been reconstructed on the moral side. But it should be repeated that anyone who expects these reforms to be accomplished over night, and anyone who is looking for some simple recipe which he can follow for the cure of these evils will be disappointed.

PART II
FAULTS DUE TO WRONG
TRAINING

CHAPTER XVII

INCORRIGIBILITY

Mrs. P. of Washington has a boy ten years of age whom she says she does not understand and cannot control. He is guilty of about all the offenses that a boy of his age could commit. "He runs away from home every day, although he is instructed when he gets up in the morning and several times during the day not to leave his own yard." He loathes soap and water; he will often go for days without washing his hands and face, although he sometimes sacrifices his meals and even the movies on account of his dirty condition. He takes money occasionally from his mother's purse. He tells lies so glibly that she cannot believe anything he says. She asks him to do chores occasionally about the house, but he never does anything in a willing spirit; "he always acts hurt when he is requested to help with the work."

The mother is now thirty-one years of age. She left her husband at the age of twenty-two because she "could not stand him any longer." She has a daughter two years older than the boy. She and her children now live at her father's home. She

teaches school in order to help support the children. She is away from home most of the time so she does not see much of the boy; consequently his training falls upon the grandparents and two aunts.

The grandparents have been stern with the boy, hoping by this means "to make him more respectable than his father;" but the aunts have treated him very leniently, saying that he is just a boy and will outgrow the traits that are now such a source of distress to the mother and the grandparents.

The mother has had no special training for a parent's duties. She was a mother at nineteen, and she was then and is still about as ill-prepared to assume the responsibilities of training children as anyone well could be. From the start her boy has puzzled her, and she has ascribed his irritating traits to innate meanness.

The mother says that the boy's father is a tempestuous, uncontrolled and selfish person. Even before the boy's conception she was hostile toward the father, so that the boy got started under unhappy and unharmonious conditions. He is probably burdened with an unstable nervous system, and certain of his traits may be due to this instability. He becomes intensely angry at times; the mother thinks he would kill the people that stand in his way or that irritate him if he had the strength. This is evidence of an unbalanced nervous system.

The mother has come to feel that whatever the boy does is wrong, and when she is near him she is incessantly correcting him and finding fault with his behavior. The grandparents have about the same attitude toward him. Their antipathy to the father has probably prejudiced them against the boy. They readily magnify his misdeeds and imagine that he is cast in the image of his father.

The mother and grandparents think the way to prevent the boy from going to perdition is to keep at him, constantly chiding him for his faults, forbidding him to do this or that, and chastising him if he does not obey. The mother is not able herself to inflict any serious pain on him, so she turns him over to her father; but every time the latter whips him he becomes so angry that he frightens them all, and they do not dare to go far enough with the punishment so that it has a reforming effect on the boy.

But here is another side to the story. When the boy is in school he causes his teachers no trouble. He gets on with his playmates very peacefully. He is in the fifth grade in a good public school, which shows he is not a dullard by any means. It shows also that he is not negligent or careless or lazy or vicious; he could not keep up with his grade if he possessed these traits.

Taking all the facts in the case together, it seems clear that when the boy is at home he feels hostile to those who criticise, command and chastise him.

For self-protection he has developed in an extreme degree obstinacy, disobedience and anger. His mother says that she rarely is in his presence when he does not show defiance. The reason for this is apparent. She has chided him so much that he assumes a defensive attitude whenever she approaches him. He has acquired the feeling that he must resist her no matter what she suggests to him. It is about the same way with the grandparents. But on the other hand the aunts get along with him quite comfortably and they think he is not a bad boy. They can even induce him to take a bath occasionally and without much urging. He is more pliable with them than with the mother or grandparents because he is not on the defensive toward them as he is toward those who are constantly trying to compel him to do things he does not like, or who are incessantly complaining about his behavior.

What should be done for this boy? He should be sent to a boys' school for several years so that he will be away from his mother and his grandparents, and he should stay away until his attitude toward them is changed. If he remains away from them long enough they will forget his faults, and they will outgrow their present suspicion of him. They cannot deal wisely with him now because they are so firmly convinced that he is bad that all the time they are attempting to reform him by compulsion. They cannot "get next" to him; so

far as they are concerned he keeps himself surrounded continually with barbed wire entanglements. He grates on them and they grate on him. There can be no good or effective training of the boy under such conditions.

It is time for this boy to have his environments completely changed, and to come into contact with different personalities. He really must make a new start in life. It can be safely said, since he has done so well in his school and has the confidence of his teachers and the good-will of his classmates, that he is capable of getting on well with reasonable people who do not mistrust him and who will cultivate good fellowship with him. This is what he needs now—to be associated with persons who will be “good scouts” with him.

CHAPTER XVIII

MISCHIEVOUSNESS

The following type described by a parent will bring the mischievous trait before us :

“I have a boy in my school who is the only boy in a family of four children. His parents are wealthy, and he is indulged in every way. He has all the newest things in ‘sport’ accoutrements. He owns a pony, and runs an automobile; and he wears better clothes than any other boy in the school. His parents and grandparents allow him to be as impertinent to them and as disagreeable to his sisters as he chooses, and he often chooses to go the limit. Yet this boy is a general favorite with the school boys, and in many ways he is an attractive and lovable child in school. He is inclined to be mischievous, but he carries his mischievous tendencies only far enough to get what he wants from his teachers. He is a bright boy, and an all-round athlete.”

A boy who has always had his own way until he reaches the seventh grade in school cannot suddenly be made to realize that he must defer to others, even to a teacher who is placed in charge of him. Nature says to such a boy: “You have

always been able to make people give you what you have wished, and there is no reason why you should not continue to make them serve you. If they hold out against you, you must simply be persistent, and make use of bullying methods until you compel them to give in to you."

It is rather remarkable that a boy of twelve years of age, who has always been deferred to by his parents and grandparents and sisters, should be a general favorite with schoolmates, and an "attractive and lovable" fellow. This indicates that he is not naturally mean, and that he could probably be induced to conform more readily than he does to the rules of the school, if he could only be separated from his home associations. But even if he must live at home, and if every one continues to serve him and defer to him, still the teacher has a chance of making him docile if her other pupils are respectful. If this boy stands out as an exception in the school, she can impress him with the fact. She can lead the pupils to condemn his mischievousness. He will take criticism from his classmates more seriously than from his teacher.

But when a mischievous pupil is a general favorite in a school, it is difficult to make much of a change in him, at least without employing drastic methods. If there should be a reader of these lines who does not appreciate the psychology of the matter, he should consider whether if he is a favorite in any community he would readily take

criticism of some of his actions by, say, his minister. The very fact that one is a favorite is the chief reason why he should continue the habits which have won him the good-will of his associates. The only reason anyone ever changes his conduct is because otherwise he would cease to be a favorite, but would on the contrary be condemned by his fellows. Nature says to every person: "Keep on doing the thing which won you the favor and approval of your comrades. If anyone criticises you, pay no heed to him. You are right in what you are doing if those around you endorse you and are pleased with your actions."

So a pupil, feeling that he is in accord with those whose regard he desires, may not be very sensitive to criticism of his actions from the teacher. When he is censured he may consider that the teacher is arbitrary, and he may go as far as he dares in resisting her authority. But when his classmates side against him he will be apt to capitulate and conduct himself in harmony with the sentiment of the school.

Here is a different type of mischievous child:

"If I leave my child alone for five minutes he is sure to climb to the very top of my organ, or take the salt cellar and shake salt over the organ keys, chairs, etc. When he gets water from the pump, which is in the sink, he may pour it over the furniture and say, 'Wash chairs.' I do not

want him to do these things and as fast as I make him stop one thing, he will do something else. When he is helping me he is all right. I want him to be full of life but also want him to obey, not from fear but from love and because it is right."

When this boy is helping his mother he is "all right," but the moment he has nothing to do he gets into mischief. This explains the case. He must be active in some way. Unless the mother can provide proper activities for him he will do other things which will seem to be mischievous and destructive, and he will be very likely to forget what he has been told not to do. Young children have very short memories for prohibitions. They even forget severe punishment very soon. Whatever they wish to do at the moment so captivates them that everything else is driven out of mind for the time being. There is but one way to solve a problem of this kind and that is to arrange for suitable occupations for a child. He should have a sandpile and building blocks and paper and scissors for cutting and toy furniture and dishes to wash, and so on.

This boy will climb to the top of the organ if the mother does not watch him. Does he have anything else to climb? Has he a climbing ladder? Is there a tree in his yard that he can climb? One of the deepest impulses and most profound needs of all normal children is to climb. If there are no trees or ladders a boy can climb, then he will

climb on the organ and on every other thing in the house which will enable him to gratify this instinct.

A boy of this type should learn that when he is forbidden to do a certain thing he will suffer serious consequences if he does it. But if there are a great many prohibitions they cannot be enforced. If there are only a very few it should be possible to have them observed. But no method will work successfully unless the boy has opportunity for occupation in legitimate ways. If he is told not to do this, not to do that, and not to do the other thing until there is nothing interesting left for him to do, then it is certain he will disobey, even if he is punished severely for his disobedience.

Boys should have outdoor playgrounds where they can be alone much of the day, working in sand, or running, or playing games of one sort or another with playmates. Children should be away from adults a considerable part of each day, playing by themselves or with children of their own age.

Should a child be taught to do right because it is right? In time he will learn this lesson, but a young child cannot appreciate right for its own sake. One source of trouble in many homes is that parents think young children ought to understand what is right in all situations and observe it the same as they do themselves. This is likely to lead to constant conflict.

CHAPTER XIX

THIEVERY

The members of a parent-teacher association in a middle-western city have devoted three months to a discussion of theft among children. The matter came up originally on account of thievery in one of the grade schools in the city. The children had been complaining that some one was taking their pencils, their luncheons, and any objects which they might leave in the pockets of their wraps or in their desks. It was finally discovered that two girls in the seventh grade were guilty. As it happened, they were children from good homes; and their misconduct was a shock to all who learned of it. So the parent-teacher association took up the general subject of stealing in the attempt to find out the causes and to consider practical remedies.

In the course of the three months' discussion, a considerable number of concrete cases of thievery in the schools and some in the homes and on the street came to light, much to the surprise and distress of the parents and teachers. The examination of these cases showed that no single cause

could be assigned for stealing, and that there was no one simple method of dealing with it.

It must first be appreciated that children very slowly learn the difference between *mine* and *thine*. In the beginning, everything is *mine*. Nature says to the young child: "Get everything you can for yourself." No one would think a year-old child could be guilty of stealing, as the term is usually employed, simply because he can make no distinction between what belongs to others and what belongs to himself. And how does he learn this lesson? By the way people treat him when he takes objects which, as he discovers in time, belong to others. He finds that when he tries to take his brother's playthings, say, the latter will resist him, and he may even punish him. He finds also that there are some objects which he can use as he wishes and no one will complain. In time he comes to think of the latter objects as his own. These lessons are repeated perhaps twenty or forty or even a hundred times every day, until in the end the child gets it firmly impressed upon him that while some things belong to himself, still most objects around him belong to other people, and he must leave them alone, unless he can either by request or by purchase secure them. He *must not take them* without the consent of the owner.

Look at the case of the two girls who had been taking objects from their playmates in the grade

school. They really did not need these objects because they could secure most of them, at any rate, in their own homes. Why, then, did they take them? The trouble started with one girl in the group. From early childhood she had been inclined in the direction of stealing. She would take money from her mother's purse without asking for it. If she were at a party, she would steal a bright ribbon if she could get a chance to do so. She would even put a plaything in her pocket if she felt she could make way with it and not let any one see her. The parents did not regard the matter very seriously, though they often told her that she should let things alone that did not belong to her. Her stealing was not marked enough to attract attention, so that it was not generally known in the neighborhood that she was delinquent in this way.

She had been instructed at home until she reached the seventh grade, when she was sent to a public school. Her failing then had a good opportunity to develop. Since she came from a fine home, none of the teachers suspected her, and so she was allowed to go about freely wherever she wanted to. She began showing the things she had taken from children's wraps to her most intimate playmate who was fascinated with this method of securing interesting objects, and who gradually came to be as active as the ringleader in "swiping things."

The first girl is possessed of a native impulse to steal. The second would never have thought of stealing if it had not been suggested to her. In time stealing became a sort of bond that bound the two girls together in an intimate and secret relationship. It had something of the value of a Greek-letter fraternity, which enables a small group to have close experiences and community of knowledge which the rest of the world do not possess.

In the treatment of these cases, the leader has probably not yet been permanently cured; but it is likely that the other girl will never again be delinquent. They have been separated, and they will be kept away from each other completely. In their new associations there will be no suggestion of stealing. The experience of being detected and the humiliation accompanying it, with the prolonged disapproval of parents and teachers, will be sufficient corrective if the second girl should ever again be tempted to steal. Mere correction or condemnation, however, would not be a sufficient preventive. If she had been left in the association of the leader, and if she had not formed new companions, it is doubtful whether her reform could have been accomplished.

In institutions for the study of delinquency, it is found that usually in the early experience of the habitual thief there has been some secret idea which has not been expressed and which has upset

the character, as it were. Perhaps the child has seen vicious acts or heard vicious language which she could not describe to any one. It has made a profound impression upon her; and having had to repress it, it tends to work out in some form of misconduct—in stealing, lying, truancy, or some other misdemeanor. It is possible that the “born” thief of popular description is really not born, but is made by having secret experiences, usually associated with sex in some way, which have disturbed the foundations of character, and have made it impossible for the individual to conform to the moral regulations and restraints of the environment in which he lives.

In the cure of such cases the approved method seems to be to induce the offender to express the hidden or repressed idea. He must bring everything out in the open. If he can be got to reveal secret ideas, they may no longer be a disrupting force in his life, and he may regain moral control and restraint.

But most of the cases of thievery cannot be explained on the basis of repressed ideas or “impulsions.” Many children get into the way of “taking things” because of the lax conditions in the home, the community, or the school. They see other people “take things,” and nothing happens. When a child tells a parent that he “swiped” a pencil from his classmate or an apple from a grocery wagon or a ball from the baseball

team, the parent may smile and let it go. The child will conclude that it is rather clever of him to steal and get away with it. In an ancient day a man was regarded as clever if he could steal from the barbarian—the person outside of his group. Among primitive men to-day, he is the cleverest man who can steal most from the enemy. In warfare among civilized peoples, the idea of cleverness in stealing still prevails. In many homes parents unconsciously convey this notion to their children, and the latter never get it deeply impressed upon them that they are to let whatever belongs to other people absolutely alone. They are often not required to return what they “swipe.” The fact that they tell their parents about it shows that they do not regard it as a grave offense. Gradually they may extend their operations until they get into serious trouble.

It is of the highest importance that from the earliest years a child should hear his parents and every one around him talk about honesty in the minutest details of daily life. Each member of the family should have property of his own, and the others should respect it. In some homes it is the practice to have a common purse, and every member of the family may help himself when he desires to do so. There is danger in this. It may easily lead some children to feel that they may help themselves to any one's purse when they are in need. It is a delicate matter to build up in the

thought and feeling of the individual the conviction that he can never take from any one's purse but his own. This means that he should have an individual purse. What he earns or receives by gift can go into it, and nothing else can. If a child takes from another purse he must be held responsible for his act, and forfeit his own possessions as a penalty.

In a number of cases of thievery which have been carefully studied, it has been found that parents have not given the children enough to meet their reasonable needs. In certain instances the children earned money, but the parents took it all. Inevitably the children resorted to underhanded methods to obtain money or other objects which they desired. In a few cases girls of moderate means have associated with children who have been provided with attractive articles of dress, and the former have stolen in order to "look as well" as their companions. This is one of the severest temptations to steal. Parents of moderate means sometimes foolishly encourage their children to cultivate the acquaintanceship of children of large means. This usually results in a severe test of a child's frankness, honesty and straightforwardness. A child will be happier and he will be likely to develop a stronger character in associating with children of his own economic status than in trying to get up into a "higher class."

The chief cause of petty thievery among children in modern life is the craving for excitement induced largely by sensational motion pictures, but also by excitements found in the Coney Island type of amusement. These are so seductive that they tend to upset a child's character. They pull on him so hard that he cannot resist, and he will go to any length to get the money with which to gratify the abnormal craving for this excitement. One way to solve this problem is to have free motion pictures provided in the schools as social and community centers. In communities where there are free pictures in the public schools, the lure of the nickelodeon and the "White City" has declined. In communities in which there are public playgrounds and swimming pools open after school hours until 9:30 at night, the sensational "movies" do not acquire such a firm grip on the children. The exhilaration gained in a swimming pool is more wholesome and better for the building of character than the sort of stimulation that is gained in the "White City" or in the typical "movie" theater.

Closely associated with thievery is the love of adventure, the craving for unusual things, for daring experiences. The parent and teacher should gratify these impulses and cravings in wholesome ways, by providing opportunities for their indulgence—in making arrangements so that the young may take long hikes, canoe trips, tramping trips,

and the like. The Boy Scouts is founded on the right principle in respect to this love of adventure. If it be indulged in a normal, healthful way, it will be a corrective for abnormal and unhealthy craving and conduct.

CHAPTER XX

LOAFING

A boy, J., seventeen years old, well-endowed physically and mentally, was reported to his parents to be failing in his work in the high school. He was not attending to his duties regularly; he was not preparing his lessons properly; and he seemed to be inattentive and indifferent in his classes. One of his classmates who was making an excellent record in school and who had won the admiration and affection of his teachers, though he was not natively as strong physically or mentally as J., was asked for his opinion regarding the reason for the inferior work of his classmate, and he replied: "He has no habits. I know the way he lives at his home, and he does not do anything on time or with any 'pep.' He eats anything he wishes whenever he feels like it. He gets up at irregular times and he sits up until a late hour at night, reading or 'fooling around.' He doesn't have any ambition to do anything the best he can."

This explanation seems to account precisely for J.'s sloppy work in everything. He has not learned to do any of his work up to a high stand-

ard, or to save his energies and use his forces to greatest advantage by following a regular program. On account of his irregular habits in eating, sleeping, taking exercise and the like, he generally feels "rotten." He habitually eats more than he needs, especially of any article which he likes. He does not take systematic exercise. When the notion strikes him he may play a game of baseball or perform on the apparatus in the gymnasium and overdo the matter, and then he will be stiff and "punk" for a week. He does not have regard enough for his health even to attend to his teeth or take a shower bath every day.

At the bottom of this boy's lassitude and mental inertia is his indifference to what those around him think about him. It is all the same to him whether he stands high or low in the estimation of his teachers and his classmates. Quite frequently one sees boys like J. who appear to be indifferent to the reputation they enjoy among their acquaintances, and it is always difficult to lead them to do anything up to standard.

The chief spur to effort of any kind is the desire to gain the good-will of one's fellows. If a boy does not care he will be sloppy and lazy in all his activities. Sometimes one sees a girl who does not care either, and she will not go very far in her intellectual or ethical or esthetic development. Such individuals lack the necessary stimulus to refrain from indulgences that lower energy and

interfere with physical and mental achievement. They easily acquire bad habits that waste their energies and take all the "pep" out of them. They lack incentive to make the proper effort to reach reasonable standards in their intellectual work, in their appearance and in their conduct.

Occasionally children are born short in respect to the desire to do as well as those around them do in order to gain the respect and admiration of their associates. Such persons are as a rule feeble-minded. They never gain control of their animal impulses and appetites and so they cannot reach a high point in mental or ethical development. But there are boys and girls who are well-endowed by nature, who are not in any sense feeble-minded, but who through early habits of self-indulgence and loafing get into the "don't care" attitude. Their bodies are never in good working trim because they have no health habits. When one looks at them he can tell that they are stuffed with half-assimilated food. One cannot develop energy and ambition and sensitiveness in a body and brain that are blocked up with waste matter.

We can go a step farther in explaining these cases. With hardly an exception, they have no interest or need in life which requires them to keep themselves in proper physical and mental condition. The school does not make a strong appeal to them and they have no work outside to do or ends to attain which take a firm hold of them and

compel them to do their best. The second boy mentioned above said by way of explanation of the first boy's low standards and inertia: "I find that if I loaf for a week I get all out of 'kilter.' Nothing goes very well. If I should loaf for a month I wouldn't have any more ambition than J. has. But I can't loaf. I have no time for it. I like what I am doing and it keeps me busy every hour when I am awake. I feel a lot better when I am going after things good and hard because I want to get them done than when I have nothing much that I want to do. For this reason I would just as soon have none of these vacations when one must hang around and doesn't have anything particular to do."

Here again the boy struck the nail on the head. One who does not have something ahead of him that he is very anxious to attain will get into the "don't care" attitude. He will be lazy and indifferent; he will indulge his appetite, and he will not try to keep his mind and body in good working condition. Nature has made us all on this pattern. No one would keep himself fit right along if he had no object ahead requiring him to restrain himself and develop his powers to the utmost. When a man retires from business and has nothing to do demanding physical and mental vigor, he is likely to go to pieces speedily. Children brought up as though they would never need to do anything either to support themselves or to

gain social position cannot be trained so that they will keep themselves fit in body, intellect or morals.

This is the law: having an object to strive for that requires one to be at his best in order to do his best is the chief stimulus to worthy ambition, to the control of appetite, and to the development of health habits. Without health habits one will not feel a keen desire to stand well with one's fellows and to get ahead; so these things act and react upon one another. If a parent cannot bring influences to bear upon a lazy, indifferent, self-indulgent boy, so that he will wish to stand as well in school and outside as those around him, and to gain as good a reputation for ability, industry and decency, then it will be extremely difficult to have him acquire health habits. And if health habits cannot be gained, it will be impossible to prevent a boy from continuing to be indifferent, flabby, and sloppy in body and mind. These matters all hang together and must be treated as phases of a unity.

What might be done for the first-mentioned boy, J., who has good native powers but who is not utilizing them to advantage? He should be taken out of school immediately and placed in a position where he would have to do the best work of which he is capable or starve. He should be required to be up in the morning regularly by a certain hour, to be at his task on time, to stick to it for a given period, and to do work up to stand-

ard every minute. If he could have training of this kind for a year or two it would undoubtedly change his whole attitude toward life. His natural qualities would then stand a chance of coming to the front and he might make something of himself. He would discover that he could derive more pleasure from accomplishing things worth while and keeping himself fit to do high-grade work than he now gains from loafing and from gratification of his animal impulses.

It is unlikely that any reform can be wrought in him so long as he continues to live at home, because his program cannot be changed materially. Practically nothing can be achieved by talking to him about his shortcomings. He has been scolded and exhorted so much that he has become callous to complaints and warnings and appeals. What he now requires is a complete change of environment; and he must be brought up against the necessity of utilizing his natural powers or suffering the consequences in hunger and other physical discomforts, and the loss of the respect and good-will of his associates. If he could only be made to feel the pinch of actual need he might rise to the occasion, conserve his forces and employ them in accomplishing tasks of genuine merit.

CHAPTER XXI

THE POOL HALL EVIL

An investigation made recently in one hundred towns in a western state brought out the fact that in the majority of these places boys in the teens spend their evenings loafing in or around pool halls. The teachers and ministers in these towns testify that the influence of the pool halls is almost universally unwholesome. The boys learn rough speech and bad manners in these halls. Further, they sometimes get started in a criminal career by the suggestions which they receive at pool halls. The hangers-on at such places brag about their exploits in stealing or destroying property, and susceptible boys are harmfully influenced by talk of this kind.

The teachers and ministers in every one of these one hundred towns said that pool halls should be abolished. There is a law in the state which is designed to keep boys under seventeen years of age out of pool halls, but it is not enforced anywhere. Those who assisted in investigating this problem could not recall a case of a manager of a pool hall

who had been prosecuted because he had permitted young boys to frequent his establishment.

It is doubtful whether the pool-room evil can be controlled wholly by legislation. It must be solved largely in a positive, constructive way. Boys frequent pool rooms because they find there a kind of activity which is adapted to their nature and needs. Pool is an attractive game. To play it successfully requires a high degree of skill. It is valuable from the standpoint of the development of steadiness of nerve and muscle and accuracy of eye. If the game had been associated originally with Y. M. C. A. and church and school gymnasiums, it would to-day have been regarded as one of the most wholesome of all sports. But unfortunately it was first introduced in connection with saloons, and it was played only by dissolute men, and so it has acquired a bad reputation. Its badness, though, is not inherent or necessary; it is a matter wholly of evil association.

It was suggested to the teachers and ministers of the hundred towns mentioned above that they should begin a campaign to have the gymnasiums in the public schools open until half-past nine at night and to permit all the boys to go there and play games. In the school buildings in a number of these towns there are shower-baths and swimming-pools and it was advised that the boys should have free access to them in the evening. It was further suggested that the churches should so far

as practicable provide opportunities for the boys to play games that would indulge the interests that are gratified by pool. A number of the towns have begun this constructive program. One town has already demonstrated what can be accomplished in solving the pool-room evil by putting something good in its place. The gymnasiums in the town are now open until 9:30 every week-day evening. Two of the churches have provided facilities for games suitable for boys up to the age of seventeen. They have both established swimming-pools. They charge only a small fee for membership, which entitles a boy to all the privileges of the gymnasium and swimming-pool. A room has been set aside in the free public library where stories are told or read every night by a group of readers who have volunteered for this service.

What is the outcome of this constructive movement? The gymnasiums in the schools and in the churches and the story-room in the library are drawing the boys quite generally off the streets and out of the pool rooms and all hanging-out places. Groups of rough boys were accustomed to hang around the railway stations, but one can rarely be found loafing around there now. Where are the boys? Playing games or listening to stories in wholesome places.

The time may come when the work of the schools will make such demands upon pupils that they will

have no time to be on the streets and especially to loaf around pool rooms; but neither teachers nor parents are willing now to assign duties outside of school which will occupy the time of pupils fully during the evening. Boys will have some leisure anyway; at any rate they will take it even when their work is heavy in school; and to provide opportunities for this leisure to be spent wholesomely and helpfully constitutes one of the most pressing problems to-day in most American towns and cities. The problem cannot be solved by a negative or punitive program. A boy's desire to spend some time every day with his "pals" and to play competitive games demanding skill and endurance must be provided for under wholesome conditions. Otherwise the pool-room evil as well as the railway-station evil and the livery-stable evil will continue to distress us.

In this connection a word may be said regarding boys' clubs. It is an encouraging tendency of the times that people who are interested in church work, in charitable work, in educational work, or in reform work are appreciating the necessity of providing wholesome amusement for boys during their leisure hours. Boys' clubs are being organized in large and in small communities throughout the country. The Boy Scout movement has already made great progress and it is winning the support of serious people everywhere. Other movements of similar character are getting under

way. We are awakening to the need of looking out for boys and not letting them find their own amusements.

It is an easy matter to lay out plans for a boys' club, but it is a difficult task to make such a club a genuine success. The majority of those who start boys' clubs are not adapted by nature to lead boys. The typical adult who may be successful as a business man or a lawyer or a teacher or a doctor may make a failure in working with boys. Most men cannot divest themselves of their grown-up ways and views when they are with boys. They may make an attempt to be boyish, but they are childish instead. Still other adults never can get over talking and looking and acting like persons who have gone to seed, though they mean well, of course. Such persons never have success in leading boys. So soon as they begin to play a prominent part in a boys' club, the club will break up.

The first step to take in establishing a club is to provide facilities for muscular activities. One can never have a successful club unless there is opportunity for games, plays, athletics and muscular competition. A boy is motor before he is intellectual, esthetic or even religious. He would much rather jump into a swimming-pool than to listen to a lecture on the rewards of well doing, which is the theme usually discussed by grown-ups when they talk to boys.

A boy likes romance, adventure and daring exploits. He will be captivated by a moving picture

or a story which possesses these characteristics. Pictures and stories can be utilized in a club of boys for their moral and spiritual development as well as for their entertainment. Every boys' club should have moving pictures. There are various ways in which money can be raised to buy a lantern; a satisfactory lantern can be bought now for \$250. Local churches or schools cannot afford to develop a library of films, but state institutions could find the means to do so if people showed an interest in the matter. Companies are being organized to make films which will be suitable for young people, and these can be rented by schools and churches, at a moderate figure.

Every boys' club should have a good story teller, or at least one who can read stirring tales in a captivating way. No boys' club is quite complete without stories of adventure, of daring and of humor. One must have special talents, though, to tell or read stories so that they will have a good effect. The average reader will kill a good story. He is so awkward or self-conscious that the story dies within him,—it never gets through him and across to his hearers.

Nature intended boys should be out in the open most of their waking hours. A boy's club should be organized so that frequent hikes can be taken. The Boy Scouts have achieved extraordinary popularity mainly because the out-of-doors, adventurous life has been made prominent. If the Boy

Scouts had been an in-doors organization it probably would have been given its quietus long ago.

A boys' club should be self-governed almost wholly. Boys who are placed in positions of responsibility and trust under wise supervision receive good training; and besides, the morale of a boys' club is improved when each member realizes that he is playing a part in establishing the rules and regulations of the club. It is an incentive to play fair when a boy feels that he is not being coerced into conformity to rules made by outsiders.

Most social organizations are held together partly because refreshments have a place on the program. Even adults as a rule will not go to clubs or meetings unless they think there will be something good to eat at the end. It is unfortunate that refreshments play so large a rôle in social groups, but they do, and account must be taken of the fact in the conduct of boys' clubs. There should be simple refreshments at all regular meetings,—apples, pop-corn, and sandwiches perhaps.

CHAPTER XXII

ROUGHNESS

All children are more or less rough by nature, in the sense that they are impulsive and vigorous in all their actions. Only slowly do they become sensitive to the interests and needs of persons around them. They are not born thoughtful about the feelings of others; they must acquire thoughtfulness as they develop. In the beginning they are much more eager to be busy in their own way than to please people, and this makes them seem rough from the adult standpoint.

But frequently we make children rougher by our methods of training than nature herself makes them. By way of illustration,—a parent was overheard talking to two children who were traveling with her on a train. They were probably four and six years of age. The windows were all open because the weather was hot. The children were striving constantly to put their heads out of the window a little way. They were fascinated by this novel experience. Nature was urging them to do this in order that they might have new sensations; they felt the air on their faces and they saw the

objects fly past them at terrific speed. But the mother was not thinking of the pleasure or the good they would derive from this source. So she was incessantly commanding them to sit down and behave themselves. Her voice was harsh, rough and decidedly unfriendly. She took hold of the children several times and shook them and threatened them with more painful treatment if they did not obey her. There was no parental affection in her voice or in her touch; and one could tell that this was not the first time she had talked to and handled her children in this ungentle manner.

Take a child who is dealt with in this way several times every day from the age of three or four on to nine or ten,—how can he avoid imitating the voice and facial expression and manner as well as the disposition of his elders? Every child is an imitator by birth. An observing parent knows that a child will come home from school, say, and reproduce the teacher's voice, language and manner pretty accurately in his play. But he is more deeply influenced by his parents in this respect than he is by his teacher. And when he is surrounded by persons who are rough with him, he will develop roughness on his own account. This is as certain as anything can be concerning child nature.

Why is it that many of us will jerk children around in a rough way, and talk to them in harsh tones, and look at them with ugly expressions when

we would not think of behaving in this way with an adult? But so far as the outcome of such methods is concerned, we might better display a malevolent disposition toward adults than toward children, because the former can resist our harmful influence in a degree while the young cannot protect themselves to any extent. They will copy us since they do not have a well-established personality of their own. One who appreciates this will take special pains to be self-restrained and poised in dealing with the young; and if he must vent his angry feelings on some one he will do so on an adult.

CHAPTER XXIII

FINICKINESS

Jack is six years old, an only child. His mother and father have some leisure and they devote themselves to his welfare; at least one of them is with him most of the time. They would like to make him an unusually bright boy so that he would lead his classmates in school, and they try to explain all the mysteries of the world to him. When they are with him they are instructing him, or counselling him how to conduct himself so that he does not have much spontaneous play. He secures his exercise mainly by walking out in the evening with one or both of his parents. Instead of romping with him when they are with him they talk to him in the effort to lead him to understand all he sees and hears. This makes him more like an adult than a child in his actions. There is hardly ever any soil on his clothes or on his hands or face; he keeps immaculately clean. This means that he does not engage frequently in the active, rough-and-tumble games which boys of his age like.

Jack does not have a vigorous appetite and this worries his parents. They enjoy a liberal bill-of-

fare themselves, because when they were young they lived a vigorous life in the country and they acquired the habit of indulging generously in food. The habit is still with them, though they do not now do any hard work. They would be as well or better off with half the amount they consume; but they enjoy eating and they have a measure of satisfaction in being able to "set a good table;" in a way it establishes them among the higher social groups to have five or six courses at their principal meals.

But Jack is so finicky about his food that he will often not eat a mouthful at breakfast and only very little at other meals. The parents think he will never be strong unless he will eat full meals regularly as they themselves do; and they have adopted various means to induce him to partake liberally of the food which they enjoy. Their favorite method has been and still is to bribe him to eat this or that dish. Usually the first topic of conversation in the morning relates to Jack's eating. He asks if he may do something during the day, say go to the movies, and the father will reply, "If you will eat your oatmeal and your egg for breakfast and if you will eat your dinner like a little man, I will take you to the movies in the afternoon. But if you don't eat a good breakfast and a good dinner, I can not take you, of course." Jack will often try to strike a better bargain by asking if he can't omit one dish or another, and sometimes there will

be dickering back and forth for several minutes between Jack and his father. At table this line of talk is continued. The parents keep an eye on Jack and he goes through the motions of eating as though he were working for wages. Sometimes there is an argument as to whether he has complied with his contract,—whether he actually has eaten all his oatmeal and potatoes. Jack tries to show that he has done his duty and is entitled to his reward.

What is the effect of this method on Jack? It is most unwholesome. He has come to look on eating as a painful task. There is so much talk about eating as though it were a disagreeable business that he has contracted a hostile attitude toward it. He has come to think of it as an ordeal that has to be gone through with and not as a pleasureable pastime. In the circumstances it is inevitable that he should become finicky and even “cranky” about his food.

So long as Jack’s parents prevent him from indulging in vigorous games and plays, just so long will he be finicky and capricious in regard to food. If Jack were turned loose with lively boys of his age it would not take long for him to gain an appetite that would not require stimulation by his parents. Nature will not give an individual of Jack’s size who is not active physically a desire for a large amount of food. He does not need much. It is true that he is growing but he is undersized

and he does not expend much muscular energy; and in addition he is so fully protected from exposure by the watchfulness of his parents that he requires but little food to supply heat. Under these conditions a vigorous appetite would be a disadvantage to him. His parents are really unwise in urging food on him. They ought to leave him alone. When he comes to the table and turns up his nose at this or that dish he should be told to run out and play. He might better take the time in play than in forcing food down his throat when he does not care for it and when he regards it as a duty.

Children should not be bribed to take food. If they are not hungry they should be permitted to remain away from the table. A parent who thinks a child is not taking food enough should remedy the cause. In ninety-nine out of a hundred cases appetite will take care of itself if the child has normal muscular activity and is out-of-doors for a considerable part of every day. It is assumed, of course, that the food set before the child is wholesome, well-cooked and digestible. If a child is fed on half-cooked pancakes and syrup every morning he probably will not have an appetite for bread, vegetables, milk, eggs, or meat during the rest of the day. But in any event, it would be better not to urge him to eat even though the parents think he needs food. No good can come from making eating a burden. Nature made appetite dependant on

physical needs arising out of exercise, and if a child lives so that he does not feel the need of food he must be let go until his appetite develops in a natural way. It can never be properly aroused through compulsion.

CHAPTER XXIV

DAWDLING

A concrete case:

“Our boy is in perfect health, he is exceptionally active and vigorous and he is above the average in intelligence, making splendid records in his school work, with the one exception due to the fault concerning which I wish advice. He retires at eight o’clock and does not rise until seven in the morning, thus he gets plenty of sleep in a room with open windows. *But* he is too slow in dressing and in undressing. He takes ten, twelve or fifteen minutes to undress at bed time and he takes fifteen or twenty minutes to dress, in spite of our urging him to hurry. A few times I have told him that I would give him two pieces of chocolate if he would undress in four minutes and he always earns the candy. He gets absorbed about airships or fishing and dawdles away his time and is late to breakfast nearly every morning. How can we speed him up?”

A boy who is in perfect health, is active and vigorous, and above the average in intelligence and who appears to be normal in every respect, except that he is too slow in dressing and undress-

ing, should not cause any parent much worry. It might be regarded as an advantage from one standpoint that he becomes absorbed in airships and the like while he is dressing and undressing. He is evidently an imaginative type, and he becomes so engrossed with his mental creations that he loses interest in the mechanical process of dressing. As a matter of fact, there is nothing about dressing and undressing to arouse the interest of a boy who is very active mentally. Such a type is apt to dawdle over any mechanical task.

One would make a mistake if he should find too much fault with this child's dilatory ways in dressing and undressing. Why not let him take fifteen or twenty minutes to undress? What is the harm in it? It would probably be a little more comfortable for those around him if he would hurry. But if he will accomplish the task within fifteen minutes, couldn't his program be worked out so that he could dress at his own speed?

The difficulty will be corrected in a natural way when he becomes interested in work which will require rapid dressing and undressing, especially the former, as when he starts to school and must reach there on time. If he is late for breakfast, how would it do to clear the table as soon as the other members of the family have finished, and let him suffer the consequences of being too slow? It would be better not to talk to him incessantly about hurrying up. Talking has done no good thus far,

and it probably never will accomplish lasting good.

As for undressing, the problem is more difficult. Most children dislike to go to bed, and they seize upon any pretext to delay the process. If there is a good reason why the boy should undress in five minutes, then the best way to proceed would be to keep a record of the time he takes, and if he runs over five minutes he must be deprived of some privilege which he covets. On the other hand, if he is in bed five minutes after he starts to undress he should be granted some privilege. Perhaps his allowance could be increased five cents a day. It would be better if he could be given a more concrete reward, such as tools if he likes to work with them, or credit toward a trip which he would like to take.

There is another method which should produce good results. When the boy starts to dress, the parent should be on hand, and without saying a word to him should help him to put on his clothes. There should be a limit of five minutes for this. He would probably not object to the parent's cooperation. This should be done day after day, until the boy should begin to work rapidly by himself, as a matter of habit. The same thing could be done at night. A parent should be able to get the boy out of his clothes in five minutes without angering him and without complaining. It could be done in a friendly way, perhaps as a game. Any parent could do it who has a hearty, chummy rela-

tion with his boy. Of course, if he has a different relation; if the boy feels that the parent's principal interest in him is to discipline him and find fault with him, then he could not carry out the plan suggested very effectively.

CHAPTER XXV

SHIFTLESSNESS

A concrete case:

"I have a boy who will be nine next April. He is a child of a former marriage which was very unfortunate and I fear the boy has inherited tendencies with which I am not able to cope. He is not bad or vicious. In fact, he is very loving and kind, and more considerate than most boys of his age. But he is so 'shiftless.' He is shiftless in his work and at school. During his first two years at school, his grades were splendid. But now he is going back and his teacher constantly complains of his work. And the few duties I give him, he does half-crying and under protest. He does things only half way and if I send him on an errand, he almost always forgets a part of it.

"His father was the same, and I fear that it is an inherited trait in the boy that will be hard to overcome. Also his father was a lover of cigarettes—an inveterate smoker. And my son, at this early age, has been 'caught with the goods on.' He admits that he would *love* to smoke. His step-father is the very essence of goodness. He has never ill-treated the boy in the slightest way. But he is very 'neutral.' He neither abuses him nor takes an interest in him. I have three other chil-

dren (all under four) and, quite naturally, they make so many demands on me now that I haven't the time to devote to my older boy that I should have. I am, also, suffering from extreme nervousness and am, sometimes, not very capable of dealing with the boy as I should do."

Modern studies in heredity have shown that such a trait as "shiftlessness" is not transmitted directly. It has been proven, however, that if a father or a mother has been addicted to drugs, such as alcohol, opium and the like for some time before a child's birth, the effect will be apparent in an instability and irregularity of the nervous system of the child. This might show itself in "shiftlessness" due to a lack of nervous energy. The children of parents who have long been dissolute lack nervous vitality and they easily give way to temptation; and they are not apt to be vigorous in any work. Now, the vital question in this special case is whether the boy's father was addicted to alcohol or any other drug for a considerable period, say for two or three years, before the child's birth. He was an habitual user of cigarettes. If he were actually a cigarette "fiend" this would probably have a harmful effect upon the nervous system of the child. It has yet to be proven, though, that the excessive use of tobacco exerts a harmful effect upon one's children; but it is probable that a child of a nicotine-soaked father would be somewhat handicapped.

If the father were simply "wild" there is no reason to assume that the boy would inherit from him the difficulty of which the mother complains. If as a result of his "wildness" he contracted disease, this might have affected the boy disadvantageously. Assuming that there is no transmitted disease and that the father was not an habitué of alcohol or other drugs, then the mother need not worry about the boy's heredity. But the mother is very "nervous." If this is a natural characteristic her son would be affected somewhat unfavorably thereby. If she were extremely nervous before his birth she would transmit to him a somewhat unstable nervous system. But it is probable that her nervousness has come on after the boy's birth and as a result of the hard circumstances of her life. If so, she need not think that the boy has inherited his "shiftlessness" or any other undesirable trait from herself.

The mother is taking the boy's faults too seriously. The fact that she is nervous would lead her to over-emphasize his "shiftlessness," his "forgetfulness" and his lack of application to his work. Eight out of ten nine-year-old boys are more or less forgetful and shiftless, and inattentive to their work. Nine years of age is a rather crucial time in a boy's life. It is a transition period and he does not adapt himself very well to conventional practices around him.

If the boy has taken to smoking cigarettes this

will in part explain his forgetfulness, failure in school, and shiftlessness. The effect of tobacco on a boy of that age if it is used in considerable amount is harmful. Take the further fact that the home cannot be quite a home to the boy since his stepfather cannot feel toward him as he would toward one of his own children, and we have an explanation of the boy's traits without assuming that he is exceptional or the victim of evil heredity.

What about his associates? What kind of boys are his companions? Is it possible that he has at his early age acquired bad habits which would dissipate his energies and lead to shiftlessness and lack of interest in his work? Often this is the explanation of a marked change in a boy's attitude toward life and in his general behavior.

CHAPTER XXVI

WHINING

A mother writes:

"I have a child three-and-a-half years of age who whines a great deal. He usually has no reason for it at all. He seems to have got into the habit of crying on the slightest provocation—if anyone crosses him in any way, or if he cannot get immediately what he desires, or even if while building with his blocks, say, they tumble down as a result of his carelessness. I have talked to him time and again about his crying, and have whipped him for it, but it does not seem to do any good. Can such a bad habit as this be cured?"

Very young children cry on slight pretext, and usually their crying is out of all proportion to the cause of it. It is just the other way in adult life; the typical adult will bear heavy misfortune without shedding tears, while the young child will not bear even the slightest amount. Nature has constructed the child on this plan, and parents should recognize the fact and ignore a large part of their bawling. Most adults are too easily worried and annoyed by a child's crying. They think he should

restrain himself, and they attach too much importance to his lack of restraint in this regard. A parent should proceed on the principle that the normal child will cry more or less without adequate cause; and often he should be let to cry himself out without any notice being taken of it. When he discovers that he cannot gain anything by this means he will gradually abandon it.

If there is a physical reason for his crying, as there often is, of course, this should be detected if possible and remedied. The chances are that a three-and-a-half year old child who has opportunity for muscular activities and for games and plays, and who is well nourished and sleeps well, will not whine a great deal without cause. If he does whine much of the time it should indicate to the parent that he is suffering irritation in some part of the body. It may be in his jaws; a developing tooth may be pressing on a nerve and creating general disturbance throughout the entire body. There may be other physical causes which could be discovered by a medical examination.

If a child has acquired the habit of whining and if there is nothing wrong physically with him so far as can be observed, then one way to break the habit will be to have him spend much time with playmates who are wholesome and hearty and who do not whine. A child will imitate his companions in their self control, just as he will imitate them in

their lack thereof. Far more can be accomplished by choosing well-poised companions for a whining boy than by whipping him. As a matter of fact it often happens that the more a child is punished for his whining the more he becomes settled in it.

In order to correct any bad habit, a child, or an adult either for that matter, must have a good model to strive toward. Even a grown person who has evil habits could not break them merely by sitting down by himself and saying: "Now I will get rid of these bad actions," unless he should have good actions in mind that he could establish in their place.

It used to be thought that young criminals could be reformed by putting them in prison or whipping them, or at least by keeping them at hard labor as a penalty for their misbehavior; but in no progressive country are juvenile offenders so treated to-day. It is recognized by all competent judges that in order to save a child who has entered upon a criminal career one must build up within him new ideas and feelings which will hold his thought and stimulate his will to better conduct. This is why all young criminals are now put to school in reformatories. Instead of being flogged they are set to studying history, geography, manual training, and so on. In time, by the use of these positive methods, the old evil ideas and motives which determined the action of the criminal's will are replaced by ethical, moral, and

social ideas and motives which make it possible for him to live in harmony with his fellows.

The principle applies to the correction of whining. The child should have close companions who will suggest self-restraint to him, and who will lead him to go ahead and play the game and not whine when things do not come his way. A group of normal, vigorous children four years of age and beyond will not tolerate a whiner among their number. They will ridicule and plague him until he learns to take things as they come without "blubbering."

Here is a different case of a crying child. His mother writes of him as follows:

"My little boy, not quite three years old, has just had several spells of fever, lasting a day or two at a time, this past month, and so I have tried to meet all his demands in order to keep him quiet. I have taken him to a physician who thought he had nothing serious, only a little trouble with his digestion and intestines.

"If his wishes are crossed in the slightest way, he will not eat (even the nicest things), cries when I dress him, when I wash his face, in fact through the whole list of things that must be done and always have been before this, as a matter of course. Now, can it be wholly his physical condition that makes him act so? And if so, what means shall I take to correct it?

"Before this past month he has always seemed well and healthy. I have thought that I was careful in feeding him. We are vegetarians, that is

we use no meat, but have fresh eggs, milk and butter, and the ordinary foods of course. He has been used to a nap in the middle of the day, but for the last year or so we have lived in a two-family house with a piano on which two or three people practice and play, and this has interfered with his going to sleep both day time and evenings."

This child does not have sleep enough. A child three years of age should sleep fifteen hours a day, especially if he is inclined to be peevish and cannot adapt himself easily to the arrangements in his home. The fact that he is now living in an apartment house in which there is a good deal of noise, while formerly he lived under quieter conditions so that he could secure his rest at regular hours, will probably explain the change that has taken place in him. He should follow a regular program of going to bed at seven and sleeping until seven in the morning, with a nap in the middle of the day.

The best way to develop poise and self-control in a child like the one described is first to have him play with well-balanced, hearty companions; second, to keep him from being over-stimulated by noise and by visitors; then, to have him form regular habits in eating and sleeping; next, to keep him occupied with his hands when he is not playing with other children; and lastly, to have him cared for by parents who are themselves well-poised, calm and cheerful, but strong, positive and decisive. A person who cares for such a child as the

one described should not become irritable and angry just because the child is inconsiderate. If these conditions are observed and the child continues to whine, there is likely to be something the matter with his nutrition or his elimination. If he drinks any tea or coffee or very much cocoa he will be irritable; also if he eats only soft, half-cooked starch foods or vegetables, or indulges too generously in candy.

CHAPTER XXVII

INDIFFERENCE

A. L. is eleven years old. She is causing her mother a good deal of distress because of her "don't care" attitude, shown in many ways. She seems to be indifferent to the criticism of those about her regarding her clothing, her speech and her behavior. She laughs boisterously on the street, though her mother has told her such conduct is not becoming in a girl eleven years of age. A. L. replies that she knows her father and mother think she is well-mannered, and what difference does it make what other people think? She tells "little stories" to children of her own age, and when her mother remonstrates with her and shows her how evil it is to tell even a white lie, A. L. says she does not think it matters much. And she does not seem to be affected at all by the penalties she receives. When she is sent to bed as a punishment for some thoughtless act, she says she "wanted to go to bed anyway." She does not seem to mind eating on a dirty table cloth; she would rather do this than change it. Sometimes she asks permission to visit a playmate in the morning, but the

mother has made a rule that she must do two hours' work about the house before she is permitted to go out for play. The girl will "fool around" for most of the day, and when it comes evening and she has not made her visit, she says that she did not "want very much to go anyway." Sometimes she is put on a diet of bread and water because she is not as attentive to her duties as she should be, and she maintains that she likes bread and water, very much, and takes it all as a matter of course.

The mother has talked to the child day in and day out about her indifferent manner, but it makes her no more sensitive. The mother has tried for weeks at a time to awaken a sense of regret or a responsive attitude to her admonitions or criticisms, but the girl goes on her placid, it-doesn't-matter-much way. This has got on the mother's nerves so that she frequently now has nervous headaches after she has struggled with the girl for hours without any appreciable beneficial results.

Self-protection is the profoundest instinct in human nature. Everyone, young or old, tries to defend himself against injury or annihilation, whether physical, intellectual, or social. Also he will defend himself against domination by others. Nature urges every individual to play an independent rôle and take the initiative so far as practicable in his daily life. No normal person of any age or sex will of his own choice subordinate him-

self to another. He will resist interference with his desires and undertakings so far as he deems it expedient so to do.

A. L. exhibits one kind of self-protection. Her mother is very solicitous about her behavior and her ethical and moral development, watching her in her every act in the effort to prevent her from acquiring undesirable traits. Whenever the girl is in the mother's presence she receives instruction in respect to some matter of conduct, and she is generally criticised for her actions. Whatever she does is wrong, or at least it is not just what the mother would like to have her do, or what the mother herself would do. The mother would speak more kindly, more gently and becomingly than the girl does to her companions and her elders; she would be more careful than the girl is about her personal appearance; she would have a keener eye than the girl has for the esthetic arrangements of the table. Again, the mother would be more careful than the girl is not to misrepresent or exaggerate in anything she says. And the mother is anxious that the girl should grow up to be a truth-telling, considerate, well-behaved, kindly woman. The mother is eager, earnest, apprehensive; and the girl is for the most part indifferent.

Suppose the girl should take to heart all the criticisms which she receives, what would happen to her? She could not live with herself. She would be gloomy, self-critical, despondent. Her

individuality would be destroyed. The mother is anxious to make an adult of her in her interests and conduct; she is not willing that she should think as a child, feel as a child and act as a child. But nature wants her to think, feel and act as a child, and so nature says to her: "Don't pay very much attention to what is said to you. You will be blamed anyway, so let criticism and advice go in one ear and out the other. Go ahead cheerfully with your own concerns, and you will come out better than if you feel too badly about what your mother says to you." Nature wants the child to protect her individuality, and so she develops the "don't care" attitude. The attitude is rather superficial, and yet it is deep enough to prevent the child from feeling humiliated and remorseful when she is condemned.

One can see this self-protective instinct operating in any home or school in which the dominant note is criticism or exhortation. One can observe children who are constantly lectured for their misconduct, and it is evident that what is said to them does not strike in deeply; it may not find any lodgment at all. The moment the fault-finding ceases the victims are as happy as they were before. They may have the outward attitude of listening to what is said, but inwardly their thoughts and feelings are running in another channel. If they were responsive to all the scolding they receive, they would be seared and blighted.

Some adults who read these lines may have difficulty in taking this point of view. But they can gain illustrations from their own experience. Anyone who has in his household a person who is inclined to complain constantly of his appearance, or speech, or actions, or manners, will always assume a "don't care" attitude toward the critic. He will let the criticisms go in one ear and out the other. His thoughts and feelings have learned how to protect themselves against the irritation of continual fault-finding and admonition.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OVER-INDULGENCE

The writer has had an opportunity to study the daily life of several persons, ranging in age from eleven to fifty, who are ailing a good deal of the time. Each one thinks his ill-health is due to some cause outside of himself, and not under his control. The boy of eleven has not reflected on the matter, of course, but he does not think his sick spells are due to his own lack of will power. The mature man, who is endowed with an extraordinary physique, has frequently declared that his aches and pains—his “colds” especially—are due to the “nasty” weather or to his hard work, rather than to his lack of self-restraint. When these persons have a pain or ache or begin to cough, they go to a doctor who usually prescribes some medicine and never analyzes their character or asks them a question regarding the exercise of their will in maintaining health.

The boy of eleven is apt to over-indulge in everything that appeals to his palate. His parents do not restrain him adequately because he is their only son and heir and they want him to have a

“good time.” This boy eats mainly soft, mushy, sweet foods. His parents provide soft white bread for him, and he always leaves the crust. His teeth are decaying, and when he is urged to chew crusts of bread or hard crackers he says he “hates” them. He will not eat any dark bread, or any food with a rough element like bran. He will not touch fat meat, or any vegetables except mashed potatoes. His parents were advised that he should eat baked potatoes in order to get the minerals which are usually lost in mashed potatoes; but the boy says baked potatoes are “horrid.” He shines mainly when it comes to desserts, and he will ask for two or three helpings of any sweet thing on the table. The family frequently have desserts requiring chocolate dressing. The boy will over-indulge in this, and he will lie awake at night because he is over-stimulated, and yet the next day he will over-indulge again.

Now this boy has “colds” much of the time. The cause is principally that he cannot restrain his appetite. He has not character enough to want to have good health, and to deny himself indulgences which are certain to create disturbance. Of course, he is hardly to blame; his parents are chiefly at fault. If they themselves had had sufficient vigor of character they would have trained him before this so that he would not go to excess in the use of improper foods.

It was suggested to the boy’s parents that he

would have more vigor if he would take a cold spray in the morning, or at least if he would go over his body with a cold crash towel. But he resists. He does not like the little shock which, in a child of vigorous will, would be a tonic and wholesome stimulant. But this boy hardly desires a vigorous life. He craves only the pleasures of the appetite. He is really flabby and slothful, and he seems to be getting worse rather than better. The chances are that if his parents do not deal with him more vigorously than they have done he will become a chronic invalid, mainly because he hasn't gumption enough to deny himself momentary gratification of appetite in order that he may gain vigorous, abounding life.

The case with the old man is much the same as it is with the young boy. During his earlier years he had to live abstemiously; he did not have the means for indulgence. But as his resources increased in later life he indulged his appetite with the result that now he habitually goes to excess. He frequently takes into his system in any one day three times as much food—all sorts of food—as his system can care for. Periodically his system revolts and then he has a "cold," or some ache or pain. His blood pressure is rising rapidly, but he scoffs at the idea that this is due to over-indulgence. He, too, lacks the vigor of character to deny himself pleasures of the palate in order that he may preserve physical and mental health.

CHAPTER XXIX

TARDINESS

A parent writes:

“I have two children in school. I cannot always get them ready so that they can reach the school exactly on time. The teachers send home notes saying that the children are not on time and they will have to remain after school or will have to forfeit their intermission. Now I wish to ask whether this is not going too far. I think teachers make too much of having children at school right on the dot.”

The teachers are right and reasonable in their requirement and the mother who wrote this note is wrong. It would be impossible to conduct a school at all unless promptness were insisted upon. Some readers may think it is not a serious fault if a child is occasionally late at school; but it is a serious fault. A pupil cannot be late without disturbing the whole school. The teacher must go over the ground he has missed for his special benefit. He comes in while the prompt pupils are engaged in study or recitation, and he distracts

them. If he comes in late there is no reason why others should not be late also. If he is a few minutes late to-day there is no reason why he should not be forgiven if he is a half hour late to-morrow. In time he would be wandering into the school when the work for the day was half or two-thirds over. These are the reasons why he cannot be excused if he is tardy.

One is surprised to read complaints from parents who think teachers are too rigorous in dealing with tardy pupils. Parents should be pleased when teachers train their children to be prompt. Many parents cannot themselves train their children to do anything on time. They cannot drag them to meals on time. If they attend a lecture or an entertainment they are apt to be tardy. They are not likely to meet any engagement promptly. If it were not for the school which insists upon promptness, the children in many homes would never gain the impression that they should be on time on any occasion.

It is as a rule no greater hardship for a child to be in his seat at eight-thirty in the morning than to be there at eight-forty-five or nine. A pupil who has fallen into the habit of being behind-hand cannot regularly reach the school at any definite hour that may be set for him. People who are habitually tardy have no better time of it than those who are habitually on time. In the end they will be more comfortable if they learn to perform their

tasks, whatever they may be, exactly when they should be done than to acquire the feeling that they can just as well as not take ten or twenty or fifty minutes leeway. When they develop the habit of debating with themselves how far they dare to go in their tardiness without suffering ill-consequences, they are rarely able to decide the question finally. They speculate as to whether they might safely take twenty-five or thirty-five minutes or an hour-and-a-half. They have to go through a mental struggle every day to determine how much of a chance it is safe to take in being late. They would save much strain and stress if they would decide once for all that there is a definite time when tasks must be performed, and it is entirely useless to debate with themselves whether they can safely ignore a rule.

Let those who are reading these lines observe a person who is habitually on time and one who is habitually tardy and note which one seems after all to meet his engagements and do his work with the most pleasure and with the least wear and tear. There can be no doubt about the matter; the one who has formed the habit of doing every task promptly conserves energy which the dilatory individual wastes. Also he accomplishes more than the one who never learns the lesson of being prompt, and he gains a sense of power and competency which the one who is always behind-hand never experiences.

Instead of criticising teachers who insist upon promptness, parents should praise them and support them in their requirements. When teachers inflict penalties for tardiness, parents should keep their hands off, unless on rare occasions when a child could not possibly be on time because of some accident or requirement which was inevitable. In such cases parents should go with the children to the school or send a note with them and explain fully the cause of the tardiness. Otherwise, the rules of the school must be put in operation and there must be no exception. Parents should regard this training in promptness as one of the greatest benefits which can be derived from the school.

CHAPTER XXX

PROFANITY

Mrs. M. O. Q. of Minnesota has a four-year-old son who is causing her and other members of her family much distress because he swears. Whenever he becomes angry, which is frequently, he indulges in profanity. He will swear at his parents even. Often when he is not given what he asks for at the table he begins to yell; and if this plan does not succeed then he will "swear terribly." His parents have tried to correct him by whipping him, but this method has not produced good results; on the contrary, it seems to aggravate the difficulty. The mother has tried locking the boy in a room when he swears, but then he cries so hard she is afraid he will injure himself, and soon she relents and lets him out. On such occasions he promises that he will not swear again, but after a few hours he seems to forget his promise and he will become profane if things do not go according to his wishes.

Rough persons, young or old, are usually profane. Refined speech is not vigorous and dynamic enough for those who give vent to violent passions. Profanity is employed especially in anger; it is

a form of chastisement of the person or thing that makes one angry. Cursing an individual is much like striking him. Swearing has somewhat the same significance as cursing. The one who swears reinforces his assertions or his threats by oaths. Persons who have strong hostile feelings toward others usually indulge in swearing and cursing. It is said that the men in the trenches in Europe swore and cursed a great deal. One who can swear at and curse his enemy can attack him more vigorously than he otherwise could do. Besides, profanity affords an outlet for nerve tension; it is in a sense a form of relaxation.

Refinement in speech depends upon inhibition of one's coarse feelings. One whose brute impulses easily get the better of him will almost certainly be profane. Even refined persons who would not ordinarily indulge in swearing or cursing will do both if they lose their power of inhibition, as in the case of intoxication or insanity. Sometimes a person who objects strenuously to profanity will use it when he becomes very angry, because he loses his power of inhibition.

Most boys pass through a period when they like to swear. Profanity is simply one phase of a boy's roughness. Boys and men who fight or attend prize fights usually swear a good deal. The type of boy or man who hangs around a saloon usually indulges in swearing and cursing. These facts are mentioned simply to show how profound

in the masculine nature is the tendency to swear and to curse.

One would not expect a four-year-old boy to swear; but if he associates with rough men he will readily pick up their profane expressions, especially if he is himself a rough type, as evidently Mrs. Q.'s son is. The fact that he will yell and carry on when he cannot secure what he wishes at the table is evidence that he is a bully. It also shows that he has not been well trained. A four-year-old boy should have acquired some control over his impulses so that when he is at the table he will not give way to angry passions when he is denied what he asks for. He has evidently discovered that if he will yell and swear he can compel his parents and others about him to grant his requests, and he is following a natural law in making use of any means which will help him to secure what he wishes.

It is unlikely that a boy of this age understands that swearing is offensive. He certainly does not know that the use of profanity is wrong in a moral or social sense. He has found by trial that when he swears he produces unusual response in those about him, and inevitably then he will continue to swear so long as he can in this way produce favorable reactions in those who have control of the things that he wants. If no one paid any attention to him when he was profane he might try another plan. Certainly if he always produced

an unfavorable reaction in those around him by swearing he would abandon it unless he is feeble-minded and so cannot make the proper connection between his actions and their consequences to himself. At the same time it should be remembered that profanity goes naturally with anger, and if a boy has learned profanity it is likely to be used automatically when he becomes angry, and it will take some time for him to get over the habit.

It is a handicap in present-day life for a boy to swear unless he spends his time wholly with ruffians. If a boy were to live in a saloon, swearing might prove of advantage to him. A saloonkeeper is likely to have to deal with rough men; and when it becomes necessary to pacify a belligerent customer it can often be done more effectively by swearing than by refined speech. A man, even when he is intoxicated, is likely to think that there is much power and determination behind oaths and curses, whereas he is apt to feel that there is only weakness back of temperate speech. The chances are that one who swears will fight on slight pretext, while one who will not swear will not give way to the fighting impulse.

But if a boy will later on associate with persons who do not engage in combat but who will have kindly relations with their fellows, he will be at a serious disadvantage if he has acquired the habit of using profanity. He will probably sooner or later be driven out of all groups in which profanity

is not used, and he will find his associates among vicious and degenerate groups. There are exceptions to this principle, but it is true in most cases.

What can be done for a four-year-old boy who swears? In the first place he must be removed from association with boys and men who are profane. A boy of this age has not acquired fixed habits of speech. In nine cases out of ten, he will outgrow profanity if he is not permitted to hear it. But in addition to keeping him away from those who swear, care must be taken to avoid making him angry. A parent should have discovered what experiences will throw the boy into a fit of anger and these should be guarded against. Usually parents can figure out some way to prevent their children from becoming angry if they appreciate the importance of the matter.

It should be borne in mind that the nervous system of a four-year-old child is changing rapidly, and evil practices of any sort can be overcome by avoiding the occasions which arouse them. Good habits can readily be established in the place of bad ones. This is particularly true in respect to speech. If Mrs. Q.'s boy could go for a year or so without using profanity he would be quite likely not to use it thereafter, even when he became irritated.

But it may not be possible to avoid all occasions which arouse anger. If a boy has acquired the habit of demanding anything he wants at the table,

the habit should be broken up. During the process of breaking it the boy will undoubtedly get into tantrums and he will indulge in swearing. But whenever he does this he should instantly be removed from the table. Mrs. Q. has tried the plan of shutting the boy in a room when he swears, but she quickly relents and lets him out, so he has learned that one way to get out of trouble is to cry hard. Sometimes the mother slaps him, at other times she scolds him, and occasionally she takes him away from the table. Of course, she cannot break up any habit by such irregular treatment. If she would on every occasion when he swears remove him from the table and not let him return until the next meal, she would probably speedily cure him of his evil habit. She should remove him immediately upon the first sign of oncoming anger. She should not wait until he is overcome by his passion because then it is more difficult for him to connect his penalty with his misdeed; but it would not take him long to make the connection if, upon the first display of anger, he were removed and prevented from returning until the next meal. He should be taken far enough away so that his protests will not get on the nerves of his mother. He should not be put in a dark room if he is afraid of the dark; he should not be made afraid; he should simply be denied the privilege of being at the table. The thing to be impressed upon him is that his yelling

and swearing always deprive him of the privilege of getting food.

The mother cannot endure to let him go hungry, and so when he cries hard she releases him and then gives him his meal. Of course, such training cannot accomplish much good. If she would let him go hungry he would have a constant reminder for a considerable period of his offense at the table. There would be a chance then that the penalty would become connected with the misdeed; but when he is kept away from the table for only a few minutes and then permitted to return and have his full meal he is in no condition to make a lasting connection between punishment and misconduct. Bad actions can never be restrained unless their evil consequences are long endured so that they will be firmly established and occupy a more prominent place in consciousness than the deeds they are designed to control. This is a universal law which applies to all kinds of penalties at every period in life.

Mrs. Q. has been relying mainly upon whipping and scolding in the disciplining of her boy for swearing. Whipping and scolding are rarely corrective in their effects. They are as likely to increase as to decrease the evil which they are intended to restrain. Whipping and scolding are rather irritating than curative. If they are employed when a child is angry they are apt to make his condition worse rather than better. An angry

child should not be stimulated; he should be left alone so that his nervous system will quiet down; or at least he should not be further excited by words or actions on the part of teachers or parents.

A four-year-old boy is not too young to learn that yelling and swearing will not be tolerated by his parents. If they would, without a single exception, take him to a place of retirement whenever he yells or swears, and leave him there until he is thoroughly subdued and begs to be released, they could assist him to get this habit under control. Before he is released on any occasion the parents should ask him to state why he has been punished so that in his own consciousness he will connect his penalty with the specific act of wrong-doing. It will take time, of course, to restrain a habit that has become established, but it can be done. The parents can help the boy to stop the onrush of anger by giving him a warning signal at the moment when it is apparent that his passion may get the better of him. Suppose the boy has come to the table for his dinner. He sees cookies which he wishes and asks for them. the mother tells him he cannot have them yet; they must be saved for dessert. She observes that he is likely to begin to yell and swear. Instantly she raises her hand as a warning or touches her finger to her lips or makes some other sign which will remind him of the penalty which is

ahead of him if he gives way to his passion. In the majority of cases a sign of this sort will attract the attention of the offender and revive his experience with swearing in the past and so will check his action in time to save him. This will have to be repeated many times before the new habit will become thoroughly established so that it will automatically inhibit the old habit.

It cannot be too strongly impressed, however, that the most effective way to change a four-year-old boy's evil habits is to take him out of the environment in which those habits were developed. It is extremely difficult and often impossible to control evil habits of any kind in any other way. Unless some very impressive new experience comes into his life he will continue to do what he has done so long as the situations in which his habits were formed continue without modification.

CHAPTER XXXI

SELF-INDULGENCE

Fred is coming eighteen years of age. He graduated from the high school last June, and is now about to enter college. The question arose as to how he should spend his summer. His mother thought he should rest up about home; she thought he had worked hard during his high-school course, and needed to have a good time for a few months. He lives in a moderate-sized city. The family are in comfortable circumstances; it is not necessary for any of the children to earn their livelihood yet. So there was no reason why Fred should not have three months vacation, enjoying himself with his companions in any way he chose.

Fred had never earned any money. He had always spent his summers having a good time, which consisted in riding in the family automobile, giving and attending dancing parties, going to the movies, swimming, camping and picnicing with his boy and girl friends, and "resting" for the remainder of the time. There was nothing vicious about his pleasures. During the summer he would stay out quite late at night, though, riding or

visiting with his companions, and then he would sleep half the following forenoon. His mother would always save his breakfast for him, thinking that since he was growing he ought not to miss any of his meals.

Fred did not seem to appreciate his advantages. He would often be glum in the morning, and he was "touchy" about almost everything. He would be reminded that he was having everything his own way and he ought to be more genial with the members of his family, but such talk did not make a deep impression on him. He was not very thankful for what was done for him. He took it all as a matter of course; his companions did the same. He was what might be called a pampered boy.

After his graduation from the high school last June the prospects were that he would spend the summer in the same way he had previously done. But a friend suggested to the parents that the boy should go away from home and do some work. But what could he do? He could work on a farm, but that would be too hard for him—he was not yet strong enough for such labor. It was suggested then that he should go out and sell household goods; many boys pay their way through college in this manner. It was urged that the experience of having to sell articles to people would be a good discipline for him, and would give him a taste of real life. Besides, the regular occupation would be valuable for him physically and morally.

At first the mother protested; she thought the boy was too young to assume responsibilities of this sort. Further, he had never been away from home for more than a week or two at a time, and it did not seem wise to have him spend the whole summer away. She wanted to protect the boy from hard work and to give him a good time.

To abbreviate the story—Fred spent the summer with a college acquaintance selling household goods. He made a fair success of the work. The summer was a trying one, but he kept at his task, thus revealing qualities which were rarely exhibited in his home where everything was provided for him.

Fred lived quite economically during the summer, much more so than he had ever done before. His father was advised not to supply him with much money, but to have him feel the necessity of spending carefully and figuring out how he was to pay his expenses. So the father gave Fred enough to reach the place where he was to begin his work, and to pay two weeks' expenses. He asked for no additional funds during the summer. He was "up against it" (using his own phrase) several times, and had only fifteen or twenty cents a day for food. On two or three occasions the mother was for having him leave off his work and come home. She thought he had had discipline enough. But she was prevailed upon to let the boy go through to the end of the experiment, which he did.

Now for the point of the story. Fred came home in better physical condition than he had been at the end of any summer. He was in a happier frame of mind that he ever was at home. He collected a large number of amusing experiences which he still tells with delight. He is more expressive and appreciative than he was before he had this experience. Formerly he was rather glum and talked only under compulsion; he went around as though he had a chip on his shoulder much of the time. But the summer's work took most of that trait out of him.

The typical boy in the teens cannot stand pampering. He needs to be put up against real problems—not so hard or harsh of course that he cannot solve them. But when he is face to face with the necessity of making good or going hungry, both his intellect and his better nature will develop. He will see that he must adapt himself to people and do what will please them or he will have to suffer the consequences. When he is at home being looked after by parents and servants he may never gain experience which will develop his geniality or his resourcefulness. When a boy remains at home in idleness he is likely to be over-fed, but when he must live economically during the summer and be active, his system is likely to become cleared and he will feel better and be in a better frame of mind than when he loafs.

When a boy enters the teens he should have some

occupation, preferably away from home, when he is not in school. He needs contact with strangers who will treat him according to his merits. This sort of experience is what develops masculine qualities in a boy. He should not be overburdened—unfortunately many boys are; but he should not be underburdened, and unhappily some of them are in present-day life.

CHAPTER XXXII

TACITURNITY

How frequently one hears parents complain because their eighteen- or nineteen-year-old boys will not be confidential with them or even talk over their every-day experiences with them. Mrs. S. furnishes a typical illustration of a parent who is perplexed and distressed because her son will not confide in her. She would like to have him tell her what he does outside of his home, with whom he associates, who his friends are, what his plans are for the future, and so on; but he never discusses these matters with her spontaneously, and she can hardly drag a word out of him on any topic. She says he seems to talk freely enough with people outside of the home, but he shuts up tight when he is around her or other members of the family. He often goes through a meal without saying a word. If the mother asks him a question relating to his views or experiences, which she frequently does, he will give an evasive answer and will show by his manner that he is annoyed. She says he seems to dislike to have her ask him about anything; but she thinks it is wrong for him to retain this atti-

tude toward the family and so she is trying to induce him to "loosen up."

From sixteen to twenty is the taciturn age in a boy's life. This does not mean that any boy will be non-communicative with everyone. Indeed, a boy may be very loquacious with his chums and with certain strangers, but at the same time he may be glum and unresponsive toward his father and mother and even his brothers and sisters. It is not infrequent that a mother is greatly surprised to observe her son, who is always silent in his own home, talking animatedly to a neighbor.

One reason boys in the teens grow silent in their homes is because they acquire a sort of protective attitude against the inquisitive habits of their parents. As a rule, parents ask their boys too many questions relating to their personal experiences. They think they are entitled to be kept in a boy's confidence so that they will know everything he does, and be made familiar with all his thoughts and feelings. But if he tells them his experiences and divulges his views in regard to life problems, they proceed to give him parental advice; and as a rule they disapprove of his conduct and his plans and wishes, or at least they do not endorse them without much modification. When they do approve something he has done or said, they are inclined to be unduly fulsome in their praise of him. Now, a boy from sixteen to twenty dislikes to be openly and conspicuously praised or censured. He

is passing through a period when he resents being singled out and made the object of marked attention of any kind. He cannot endure anyone who is "mushy" regarding himself, nor will he take kindly to a person who is incessantly trying to have him pursue a course which he does not wish to follow.

To return to Mrs. S. She never approves the clothes which her son buys for himself. She would like to have a hand in selecting his clothes. But when she goes to a clothing shop with him she fusses over him and makes him self-conscious and embarrassed in the presence of the clerks, and he does not like it. So now when she suggests that he needs a suit, he either makes no response to the suggestion or he says he is not ready to buy one. But the first thing she knows, he has purchased one; she discovers the fact some day when she sees him walking on the street with it on. Of course, she does not approve, and she tells him so when he comes home, which operates to increase his taciturnity.

Mrs. S. does not like the girls with whom her son keeps company. She has some girls of whom she approves picked out for him. They belong to the families with which she would like to keep on good social terms. Whenever an occasion presents itself, Mrs. S. takes pains to say something nice about one or another of the girls she has selected for the boy, which is an effective way to fix

her boy's determination not to "waste time" on any of them. The girl his mother likes most is likely to be the one he likes least, and the reverse is equally true. This is a source of distress to the mother; and when she sees her boy walking on the street with a strange girl, she begins to pry into the affair and when he reaches home she tries to get something out of him about her. But she never accomplishes very much by her "pumping" operations.

Mrs. S. has mapped out a career for her boy, but as luck would have it, it is not the kind of a career in which he is interested. She wishes him to enter the legal profession. The boy's closest friends are going in for engineering, and he has chosen this profession. Mrs. S. has not been able to bring herself to the point where she can let the boy work out his own career. Is it not remarkable that we parents so frequently treat our boys as though we had to live their lives for them? Why do we not try to find out what our boys are best fitted for and what they would like to do in life, and then help them to realize their wishes, instead of trying to impose our pre-conceived plans upon them?

If Mrs. S. were more of a companion and less of a dictator in her relations with her boy she would probably find that he would be more communicative. If he felt that when he confided to her she would enjoy his views and experiences as his

chums do he would doubtless "loosen up" as she so much desires he should do. He does not feel that his chums or the neighbors are trying to divert him from the course he would like to follow, but he feels this about his mother, so he is on the defensive when he is with her. But his defenses are all down when he is with his chums.

There is no way to secure the confidence of boys from sixteen to twenty except by being comrades or chums with them. This is difficult for many of us who have played the rôle of counselor or critic of our boys up to the teens. We should begin earlier than most of us do to play the part of chum or companion with our children. Then when the crucial age comes we will not have to change our relations completely in order to retain their confidence. But if we are so constituted that we cannot be chummy with our boys, then we must take a philosophical view of their taciturnity and let them alone. If they do not wish to confide in us we must not complain about it. We never get forward any by finding fault over our boy's lack of comradeship with us. We cannot compel them to be confidential with us; confidence is a spontaneous attitude and cannot be developed by criticism or fault-finding.

CHAPTER XXXIII

REVENGE

A mother writes that her three-year-old son, Jack, is giving her a good deal of trouble because whenever he gets a chance he teases his grandmother, who lives in the house. The grandmother is a "good, Christian lady." She believes that children should "mind." Whenever Jack is in her presence she commands him to do this or to do that. She complains that he is not obedient and not respectful. Jack is growing worse rather than better in his relations with his grandmother, and Mrs. M. is beginning to fear that he will become a thoughtless and cruel man.

He is obedient when he is with his father and mother. He "will not leave his own yard without asking permission." He has been forbidden to cross the street, and he never "will cross it unless it is right for him to go." In many ways he shows that he respects the wishes of his father and mother.

A child is in a sense mischievous by nature. He likes to play tricks on those with whom he associates. Every boy at least is a teaser by birth. He

does not realize that teasing is wrong. He can hardly appreciate that he is annoying those whom he teases. He is interested in what they do and not in the way they feel. Older persons are in error when they think children tease for the purpose of causing their victims distress.

It is difficult to prevent a boy from teasing his grandmother when she arouses his ill will, or when she is easily irritated. Even adults often tease those whom they regard as finicky. If a grandmother would take a boy's teasing in good part, and would laugh rather than scold when he plays "practical jokes" he would not play mean tricks. If he does anything really disturbing, as striking or kicking, the grandmother should take him in her arms and explain to him that that kind of "fun" hurts. If the boy keeps it up then he must get as vigorous treatment as he gives, and a little more so. This will probably cure him speedily. Scolding and nagging will not do any good in most cases. It seems rather a harsh method to pursue, but still if a boy slaps his grandmother, and if she has been good natured and has tried to make him appreciate that he causes her pain but still he persists, then she must give him a slap of the same kind as he gives, only make it good and sharp so that it will not have to be repeated. A few experiences of this kind will satisfy the boy that slapping really hurts. He will take it in good part if

it is given just as he gives it. If he should run off to his mother crying, the mother should say: "But you teased grandmother, and she teased you the same way, and every time you do it she will do the same."

This boy seems to be well controlled and obedient in most of his actions, more so than the typical boy of his age. There must be something about the grandmother that incites him to annoy her. If she would make a friend of him and play with him, she could probably prevent him from teasing her in an irritating way. She is "a good, Christian lady." Yes, but she may be too stern, too critical, too rigid with this young boy. A person may be a good Christian and not be a companion for children; he may be incessantly suppressing and criticising them and issuing orders to them.

The mother should try to have Jack do little kindly acts for the grandmother. She might say to him at bed-time: "You know how badly grandmother felt to-day on account of the way you teased her, and she is always so good to you. To-morrow we will get some flowers and give them to her, and you must think how kind she is to you, and how badly you make her feel when you kick her or slap her." It will not accomplish much simply to say to him: "You must not tease grandmother." The mother could often find things for the boy to give to grandmother or little acts he could per-

form for her. In this way he might come to think of serving instead of annoying her.

At the same time the grandmother should but rarely command the boy to do or not to do anything. No one but the father or the mother should give him orders except on special occasions. Other people in the house must keep their hands off. They may play with him and be good friends with him, but they should not undertake to discipline him. The boy will be spoiled if anyone but the parents take a prominent hand in his training. There should be complete understanding in regard to this matter.

The grandmother ought to read or tell stories to Jack. She could gain his affection in this way and he would then give up teasing her probably. But if she sits in the house stolid, critical, fault-finding, and does not give the boy pleasure in telling or reading stories or playing games with him then she never will gain his good will. She ought to devote a good part of her time to educating the boy in pleasant ways. She should read books on child nature, and learn something about kindergarten and Montessori methods and use them with Jack. She could be a better Christian in this way than in spending her time in complaining about Jack's disobedience and lack of respect, and doing nothing to interest him and to direct his energies into the right channel.

Whenever one sees a person who is continually finding fault with a child it is good evidence that she is a resourceless, self-centered, and usually a selfish person who will always have trouble with children.

CHAPTER XXXIV

INSUBORDINATION

The following letter from a school principal presents a case the like of which is found in many schools.

“Richard B. is a problem to many and is still unsolved. He has a strong will and a high temper, which probably came from his grandfather and father. During the football season of 1911, with slight provocation he jumped upon a boy and gave him a severe pounding. He was deprived of the use of the playground for two weeks. After this he was seen on the ground and ordered off as many as five times. For each time he disobeyed a few days were added to the above sentence. After the first two weeks his insubordination became unbearable, and upon consultation with the superintendent, the lad was suspended. The father took the case before the school board. The board sustained my action. He behaved very well according to our standards until one day he ran away from home, and was brought back by the sheriff. This was near the close of the school year, and on two different occasions on the street he greeted me with insulting remarks. He does not take part in the usual form of grade school athletics, except

once in a while he plays football or baseball, and then he must be the leader. He is the leader of a number of boys smaller than he is. He is admired by a large proportion of the boys in school. When he ran away from home his picture was published in the paper with a vivid write-up. When that paper came out there was a lively buzz around it in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. Nearly every one expressed some admiration of his experiences. When he came home, large groups of boys gathered around him, plainly showing their approval of him.

One strange thing to me is that he gives comparatively little trouble in any of his classrooms. He is nearly always attentive, and does his work with a fair degree of accuracy.

It is evident that we do not know how to reach this boy, because more than one teacher has failed. Perhaps his case can be solved, but how?"

It is doubtful whether this boy's failure can be laid to heredity; it is more likely that he is the product of a kind of training which has developed resistance to authority. He has probably been much on the streets, and he is evidently considered a hero by his "pals" because of the chances he has taken in refusing to comply with the rules of the school and also of the home. It is generally the case that there is some boy in a small town who covets distinction by opposing the authority of teachers and of parents and often even of policemen. In this manner he wins the admiration and envy of the "gang." Such a boy craves the hom-

age of his mates, and he will go to any lengths to gain their praise for his dare-devil exploits. It is apparent that the boy in this case has cultivated a defiant attitude toward the principal because in this way he has gained the approval of his crowd.

It is evident that the boy's present attitude toward his teachers is the outcome of a long period of antagonism to the school principals. There may be in this town a tradition that the proper thing for a gang leader to do is to disobey the principal and to insult him whenever possible. In many towns the principal is treated as though he were an enemy of the pupils, and the talk of the neighborhood stirs up and perpetuates the pupils' suspicion of their teachers. When this practice gets started in a community it is certain to make some of the boys think it is brave and clever to be openly against the principal. The most adventurous boy will be chosen to take the lead in hectoring the principal. Sometimes even soap-box citizens will express their admiration of a pupil who has "grit" and "pluck" enough to hold his own against the teachers. In such circumstances a certain type of boy will miss no opportunity to show that he will not "knuckle down" to the principal, and he will brag about his "putting it over" on the "guy."

There may be another explanation of Richard B.'s incorrigibility. The principal may be at fault; he may be domineering; and he may impress the

boys as being tyrannical. When he goes out to take part in the boys' games, he may be regarded as a martinet and not as one of the group. Some men teachers get on the boys' nerves, and arouse their mean traits. A principal who is looked upon as a "goody-goody" fellow, or a "skinflint," or a "mess," or a "sad bird" will have a hard time with his boys, especially the rougher ones. In such cases a gang leader will do everything he can to ridicule and humiliate the principal in the eyes of his companions, for in this way he can weaken his authority.

It would be interesting for any person who has not reflected on this trait of human nature to study a situation like this: A gang of boys is on the street when a teacher is passing. One of the group dislikes the teacher, and his instincts lead him to show his dislike in the most effective way, which usually is to induce the group to side with him against the teacher and arouse the latter's anger or humiliation. Now watch this boy. He will half-concealedly call the attention of his mates to the teacher and magnify traits in him which awaken ridicule. He will caricature the teacher, call him names under his breath, and do other things to belittle him. When one of the gang who formerly had not been disrespectful toward the teacher comes in contact with him, he will be influenced by the ridicule which the bully flung at him.

Of course, Richard B. may be really incorrigible;

he may not be amenable at all to the ordinary modes of discipline. The fact that he ran away from home and was brought back by the sheriff indicates that he is an extreme case. If he cannot adjust himself to the life of the school, then he should be sent to a special school where this type of boy is properly provided for. Such a boy should be under strong, masculine, virile men who can lead him and win his admiration. But the ordinary school can hardly provide for such a boy. If he be permitted to remain in the school he will be likely to corrupt other boys and make wholesome discipline impossible. The principal who has such a boy to contend with is heavily handicapped. The typical boy from ten to fifteen or sixteen is ready, upon slight provocation, to ally himself with a bully against the principal and teachers of the school. It is his nature to side with a comrade against a "tyrant" or an "enemy."

Every incorrigible pupil presents a difficult problem, because incorrigibility is always a complicated matter. But in the case of Richard B. it appears that he is respectful and well-behaved in the classroom, which seems to indicate that he is not wholly bad. Probably if he could be put under a different principal, and be separated entirely from his old associations, he would fall into line and cease to give trouble. Some men could appeal to him and induce him to lead the other

boys in right instead of in evil directions. Men like Judge Lindsey of Denver and Judge Brown of St. Louis often take apparently incorrigible boys and make them effective and dependable leaders of groups of juvenile offenders. The passion for being the boss of a gang is always profound in a boy like Richard B., and he cannot be successfully disciplined unless this be taken account of.

CHAPTER XXXV

"TOUCHINESS"

One has frequently to read and to listen to accounts of children who are hectorred and bullied by their playmates. A case of this sort has been brought to the attention of the writer by Mrs. W. of St. Louis. She has a daughter nine years of age who comes home from school almost every day complaining of the way she has been treated by her class-mates. They call her names. They laugh at her. They play by themselves and do not invite her to join them; and on the way home from school they will run ahead of her and occasionally glance back and "grin" at her, showing that they are talking about her and ridiculing her. She has a similar experience with playmates in the neighborhood. She often comes into the house crying, saying that the children with whom she has been playing have been mean to her. The mother thinks the girl is sweet-natured and that she is very anxious to be friends with her classmates and girls of her age in the neighborhood. The mother believes her child is not at fault, but that

the children with whom she wishes to play are selfish and inconsiderate.

In every school of considerable size one can observe cases of pupils like the one mentioned above. They cannot get on happily with playmates. They are always "picked on." As a rule the parents think the trouble lies with the other children and not with their own. In some schools teachers have constantly to listen to the sad tales of parents who think their innocent, kind-hearted offspring are ridiculed and persecuted by other children in the school who are rough and selfish.

It is a safe guess that when a child is "picked on" he possesses traits which alienate him from his fellows. He is peculiar in some respect,—either in appearance or in speech or in manners or in behavior. He is the ugly duckling of the playground. The chances are that if his playmates hector him he first picks on them. If they will not play with him it is apt to be the case that he will not play fair or that he is incompetent. There is something peculiar about him or he would not be singled out by his fellows and plagued and bullied.

Parents who have such a child should set to work to find out what he is deficient in or what traits he possesses that irritate the group or that awaken their sense of the ridiculous. Not infrequently parents are themselves at fault because they dress their children in a conspicuous and unusual way.

If a mother dolls up her boy in ribbons she can be assured that he will come home complaining about the rough treatment he has received at the hands of the school "bullies." It is possible also to dress a girl so that her "crowd" will laugh at her. More serious still, parents sometimes talk to their children in such a way as to make them think they must be on their guard against the meanness of their playmates and so they are always looking for trouble with the result that they find it sooner or later. They misinterpret everything their associates do, and in time they will be driven out of the group or made extremely uncomfortable if they stay in it.

Boys and girls after the age of four or five often enjoy the discomfort of a peculiar or mean member of their group. They take delight in plaguing him and making him the target of their sarcasm and their practical jokes. Frequently parents and teachers appeal to boys and girls to be sympathetic with their peculiar classmates and to be forgiving toward those who are selfish and underhanded, but it is a waste of time and energy to talk in this way to groups of children. Nature has implanted in them the impulse to hector and bully any member of the group who does not readily adopt group customs in respect to dress and modes of play and of conduct.

A parent who is wrestling with the question of what to do for a "picked-on" child should try the

experiment of inviting children to the home to play with the child and watch the relations which develop. Let the children play spontaneously and note whether the picked-on child plays freely and capably and fairly. If they play long enough together the cause of the peculiar child's defect will become apparent. If the child can and will take his part well with his companions and not seem odd or unfair he will become acceptable to them and they will cease to plague him, except as young children are always likely to hector one of their number on occasion. No account should be taken of cases of this sort.

If a parent cannot find out why his child is plagued by his playmates and if he cannot solve the problem by inviting the playmates to the house frequently, then he should pursue one of two courses,—either the child should be made to play with his fellows and stand whatever he receives without complaining, or he should be sent to another school to see whether he can get on better with a different group. He should not be permitted to continue to come home every day finding fault because of the way he is treated. If he does this until it becomes a fixed habit he may never be able to adapt himself to any group in which he may be placed. One sometimes sees adults of this type, and they are unhappy themselves and they make those about them miserable.

CHAPTER XXXVI

"CRANKINESS"

The following description will apply to children one often sees in homes :

"I have a little girl just past nine who is very bad about talking back and contradicting. I have tried to break her of the habit, but she seems to be getting worse instead of better, and she is usually cranky, gets up that way in the morning, and complains and growls most of the day."

There must be something wrong either with the nutrition or with the sleeping of this seven-year-old daughter if she is "cranky" most of the time, and gets up in the morning complaining and growling. Nine-year-old children who are in vigorous health do not behave in this way. The first thing for one to do in a case like this is to determine whether the child is in good physical condition. Does she sleep soundly? Does she have adenoids which block the breathing passages and interfere with her sleeping, and with her breathing while she is awake? Does she have enlarged tonsils which interfere with respiration? Are her teeth

sound? Are there some teeth that are not yet cut, but that may be pressing upon the nerves and making her irritable and "cranky"? If she has always been "cranky" and inclined to complain and growl, one cannot lay the blame on the teeth; but adenoids or enlarged tonsils might be the cause.

Does she eat an excessive amount of candy or honey? Does she drink tea, coffee, or cocoa; if so, this may explain her irritability. Does she eat fruit? Is she notional about her eating, or will she eat the usual articles with a good appetite? Does she have some food each day with bran or other roughage in it? Most children need a little rough food every day. She ought not to eat much meat. Meat makes most children irritable. Does the child eliminate thoroughly? This is absolutely necessary in order to prevent her from becoming irritable.

If the child is perfectly well physically, and sleeps restfully, then one does not know how to explain her constant growling and complaining unless she is nagged a good deal. If the moment she gets up in the morning somebody begins complaining about her conduct, then naturally she will react in an irritable way.

She "talks back and contradicts." This is not unusual for children who are hectored. Nature urges children to hold their own against everybody. Most children of the age of nine do not give

in readily to parents or anyone else. If the reader will watch himself he will probably discover that he does not give in readily to others either. A parent will contradict his child, though he is not apt to think of it as contradiction. Many parents like to have their own way and they cannot stand it if a child asserts his individuality.

The best way to deal with contradiction is not to give the child many occasions to contradict. Parents generally argue too much with their children, and incite them to be contradictory. The less arguing the better with any child. If certain things must be done, get them done without arguing. It would be well if one would watch himself to see whether he does not unconsciously arouse his child to take the defensive.

Most adults like to boss those around them. This is particularly true of parents in their relations to their children. This is the cause of a large part of the resistance which the young offer to the authority of parents; for every normal child rebels at being dominated by others. Nature says to everyone, whether young or old: "Don't let your personality be annihilated by anyone. Stick up for your rights. Don't be a slave. If you don't assert your individuality you will never amount to anything."

In addition to the instinct to control others, a parent is often so solicitous about the conduct of his children that he cannot permit them to take

any initiative in their own affairs. He feels that if he is not incessantly telling them what to do and what not to do, they will go to perdition. One never hears such a parent say to his children: "Do you think you ought to go to the moving pictures when you have not prepared your lessons? What sort of clothes do you think would be most appropriate for your needs? How do you think you ought to arrange your daily program so that you can do your work and still have time for some play?" No, such a parent never asks his children for their opinion on anything. He tries to determine their every thought and action. He assumes that his judgment is better than their judgment in respect to all matters, and he thinks they should follow directions, and not be bold or offer opinions.

Probably the judgment of a child who has reached the teens is sounder in respect to many of his activities and relations than is the judgment of his parents. Suppose a father arbitrarily tells his fifteen-year-old boy how he ought to stand or walk or talk, wear his hat or his trousers, whether he should have girl companions, what studies he should elect, and so on. The boy aims to follow more or less closely the models set by the group of which he is a member. The father is not a member of this group, and so he does not know its ideals, customs, or practices. The father tries to enforce the views of his own mature group upon his boy who is a member of an immature group.

The boy knows that if he adopts the actions of the grown-up group he will be *persona non grata* with his own group. His fellows will ridicule him, hector him, and even cast him out of the group. The father takes no account of this. He goes ahead in his domineering way, never once inquiring why his son should persist so strenuously in his actions in respect to his clothes, his manner, and the like.

Much of the conflict and even alienation between father and son and mother and daughter is due to the failure of the parent to take the point of view of the child as determined by the ideals and traditions of the group. A father may keep nagging his son because he wears caps of a certain color, size, and shape. All the boys in his group wear caps of this sort, but they do not satisfy the father's notions of what he himself likes. So every time the boy puts on his cap the father makes adverse comments, and says, "You must not pay any attention to what the boys say. I know better than they do what is good style, and I know that that cap is not suitable for you. You must not permit boys who have no taste to determine what you will wear." And so on through many variations. In nine cases out of ten the boy will continue to wear the cap that his group approves, but he will be irritated by his father's nagging. Every day he will develop resistance to his father's wishes and commands. He may finally reach the stage when he will automatically resist.

any suggestion that is made because he expects it will be something which is contrary to the practice of his group. One frequently sees boys who are in this resistant attitude toward every suggestion made by the adults in their households.

Of course, if there is a question of morals or decency involved, then the parent can afford to insist upon his children doing what is right and proper. But in most of the activities of children there is no such question involved. The parents magnify unimportant matters, and keep at them as though they were of tremendous consequence. But even when there is a serious moral problem at issue, the best way to handle it is to lead children to see what is right, and take the initiative in doing it. Better still, the *group* must be led to take the right attitude toward every question of ethics, morals, and decency. If a boy's group can take a stand against the use of profanity, say, the boy himself will be likely to abandon it even if he has got started in the use of it. And the principle involved is general in its application.

The strongest force in a child's behavior, and very properly so, is conformity to group practice. A parent who does not take account of this, but who ignores it and runs counter to it, will have a struggle on his hands all the time, and he will irritate his children and develop in them hostility to reasonable law and order. At the same time, a parent who has the confidence of his children

can lead them to play a leading rôle in breaking up undesirable practices in the group, and thus he can help his own children and also their companions. But he can never accomplish this if he is a *nagger*, for then his children will be hostile to all his suggestions.

CHAPTER XXXVII

CONTRARIINESS

A concrete case :

“I have a little girl three years old. She is contrary and ‘sassy.’ I try to tell her the right way about things and she will say, ‘It is not’ or ‘It is so,’ and always to the contrary. And she thinks she can do everything. Of course, that is all right, but there are things she cannot do, and she is very hard to convince. I try to let her do what she can, but she insists on doing just what will probably hurt her. Sometimes I make her sit down on the floor in a little clothes closet, but I don’t shut the door, and she will start to call names. What would you do then? You know of course that I feel as if she ought to be spanked, but I do not want to do this if I can correct her in any other way. She is very bright and picks up things she hears very quickly.”

It is quite common for a three-year-old child in a typical American home to be “sassy.” Children of this age, especially if there are many persons around them and they are overstimulated, usually develop obstinate tendencies. But the

writer has known children who were always contrary at three years of age but who become gentle and pliable and obedient at sixteen or seventeen under rational methods of training.

A mother should be careful not to make too many demands of a child and keep correcting him and opposing his wishes. Seven out of ten mothers talk too much to their children, supervise them too much, and really nag them too much. It would be much better to insist upon a few things, and *insist* upon them.

You who are reading these lines—how much do you do during a day to suggest useful and interesting activities to your child? Run over any typical day and see how many times in speaking to him you prohibited something he wanted to do, or corrected him, or found fault with him or gave him commands of one sort or another. How much of what you said to your child was pleasant or commendatory? It might be illuminating to you if you could thus make a survey of your methods. It may be that in your manner of training you arouse antagonism and opposition.

Nature equips every child with a desire to be independent,—to be free from control. If he carries this too far, life will be intolerable for him and for every one in his house and in the school. He must conform to certain fundamental rules. He must be obedient in all matters that are really essential for his welfare or the welfare of others.

But three-fourths of all that a normal child wants to do, he should be permitted to do without restraint. The best advice is: Let the child alone in most of his activities. Insist upon the fundamentals, and you will be successful; but when you command or prohibit him much of the time, it is probable that he will become contrary, obstinate and disobedient.

A normal child wishes to do everything he can for himself. All normal children wish to be self-helpful. They resent having things done for them. Suppose a child were willing to have everything done for him. What would he amount to? But suppose he insists upon doing things that will injure him? Let him go ahead and try almost everything for himself. If he touches a hot stove once, he will not do it again. Why should the parent become excited about it? Why should she say to him: "Don't touch the stove, you will hurt yourself"? He will not believe the statement until he has had actual experience. We adults even do not believe what people tell us unless we have had some experience related to the matter in question so that we can appreciate the force of what is said to us.

Many parents are fidgety most of the time because they are afraid their children will get hurt. One such parent who has two children, aged four and six, comes to mind. Both of them like to lean over the railing on the porch, which is perhaps

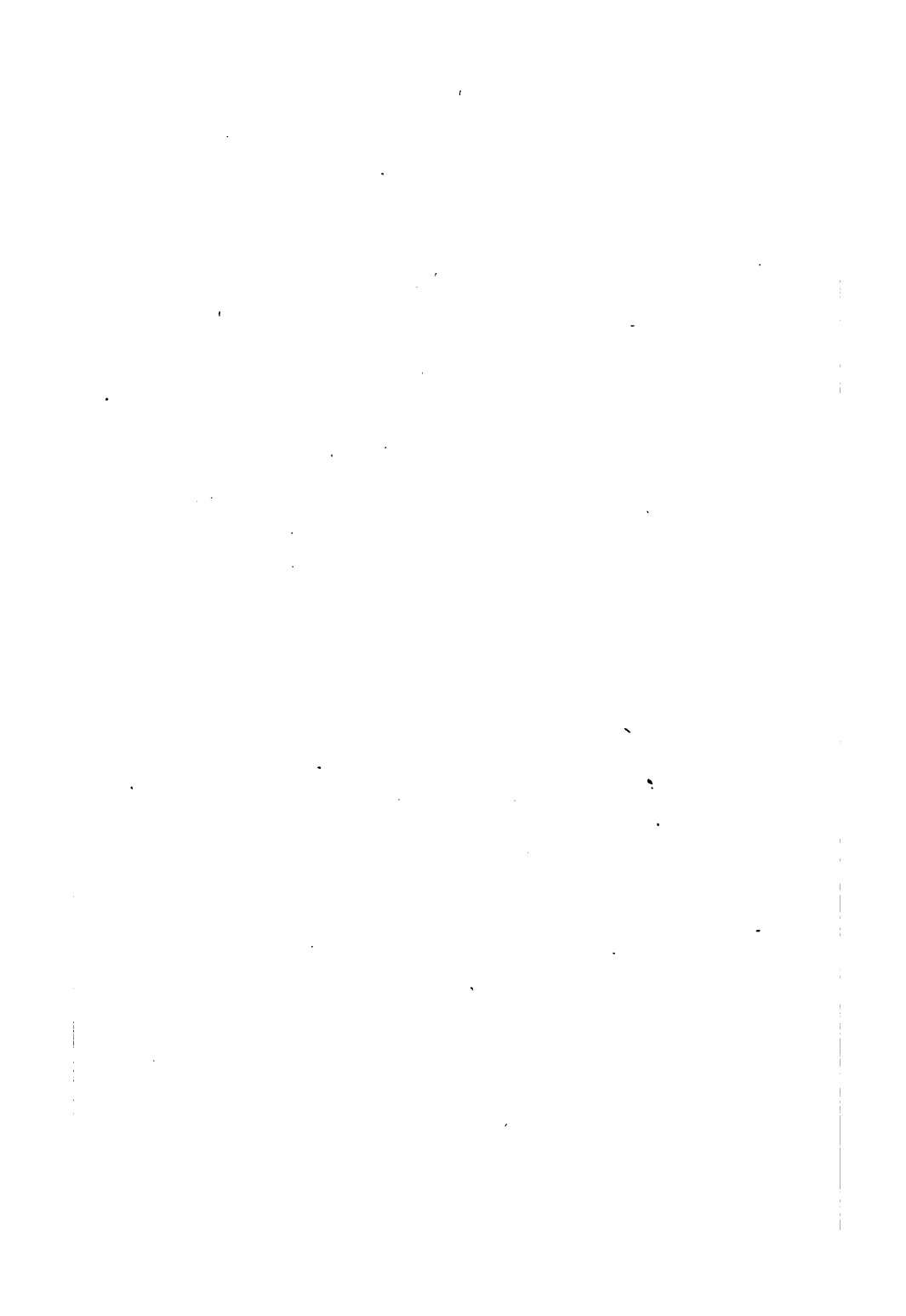
seven feet from the ground. There is not one chance in a thousand that they will fall and hurt themselves, but the mother is incessantly commanding them to keep off the railing. She even forbids them to go out on the porch except when she is there to watch them.

They live on the shore of a lake, and the mother will not permit them to go near the water unless she is with them and has hold of their hands. This undue anxiety about children's welfare deprives them of experiences which they ought to have in order to learn how to live; and more serious still, it irritates them and makes them contrary and obstinate and peevish.

The only way a child can learn how to protect himself is by *having real experience*. Of course, a parent must safeguard a young child from dangerous acts, but in the typical home there is a great deal of prohibition of actions that could not result seriously. Unless a child is allowed to have large freedom, there will be conflict in the home every day until he becomes mature, and can escape from those in authority.

PART III

**TRAITS OFTEN REGARDED AS
FAULTS THAT ARE NOT SO
IN REALITY**



CHAPTER XXXVIII

"FIBBING"

A group of children about seven years of age were observed playing in a nursery. One of the children was a "kindergartener" and the others were pupils. There was no kindergarten material, no desks, no piano, no flowers; in short, there was no kindergarten equipment in the nursery. But those children did about everything that is ordinarily done in a kindergarten. The first item on the program was a march. One girl went over to the window-sill and began drumming on it with her fingers. The "kindergartener" said, "Now listen to the piano, and before you begin to march get in step." Then she used her hand as a baton, and said, "You can all hear the music, can't you? This is the best music we have had. Miss H—— is a fine player." So the children marched around in step to the "music." They were entirely in earnest; so were the "pianist" and the "kindergartener." After they had marched a while the "kindergartner" called out, "Miss H——, you may stop playing." Then she said, "Children, you may all take your seats at the tables and you

may make any animals you wish with your plasticine." The children squatted down on the floor and began making movements as though they were actually modeling plasticine, though they did not have any material whatever. After a little time spent in "modeling" one child held up her hand and said, "Look at what a big rabbit I have made." She had nothing, but had put her fingers in a position that she thought suggested a rabbit. In a moment another child held up her hand and said, "Look at my squirrel." So it went on until every child had "modeled" some animal. The children were all serious and the "kindergartener" praised or criticised the animals shown her. After about ten minutes the "piano" was sounded again. The children got up and went through another "march." Then they went to the "tables" and began making designs with their "splints." First one child and then another would ask the "kindergartener" to look at the design that had been made, tracing on the floor with the fingers to attract attention to it. They went on this way for an hour or more, dramatizing the kindergarten. They appeared to be about as well satisfied as if they had all the furnishings and equipment found in a well-arranged kindergarten.

The incident is typical of a normal child's life up to the tenth or even the twelfth year. Always he is dramatizing the life about him; always he

is playing a part. The whole world is a stage and he is the chief player on it. Everything is or may become something else to him. Any reader who needs to have his memory refreshed regarding the make-believe of the child and especially his passion for what the psychologists call "symbolism,"—which is the process of mentally transforming an object into something entirely different from what it actually is and assuming an attitude toward it and using it as though it were the thing it is imagined to be—should read Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Child's Garden of Verses," or Eugene Field's or James Whitcomb Riley's poems and stories of childhood.

The child's love of symbolism is at the bottom of a trait which often disturbs parents. When a child comes in from the street and tells his mother that he saw a bear run past the house and he persists in his "fib," the mother may feel that he is telling a lie. The fact is he may have seen a cat or a dog run past the house and his fancy transformed it into a bear. Bears were in his mind. He may have heard a bear story in the morning and he may have played he was a bear during the day; consequently his consciousness was filled with bears, so almost anything he saw could be easily interpreted to be a bear. A child often can hardly discriminate between what he imagines and what he actually sees or hears in the world about him. It is undoubtedly the case that frequently a child's

fancies are stronger than his observation and he sees what is in his mind and not what is presented from without.

The reality of vivid dreams in adult life resembles the phenomenon of vivid fancies in childhood. An adult may awaken from a dream and be unable to tell whether he has had an actual experience or only an imaginary one. Even grown people often awaken in night terror and imagine that they see terrible creatures about them; but the creatures exist only in their disordered fancy.

As a child grows older he should normally bring the pictures of his fancy under control so that he can distinguish between what comes in through his senses on the one side and what arises in his imagination on the other. The ten-year-old child may and usually does live in a make-believe world to a greater or less extent, but he should be able to tell the difference between make-believe situations and real ones. He should by this age be trained to report what he sees and what happens to him with a considerable degree of accuracy, though it is too much to expect that he will be entirely accurate in reporting his experiences or the objects he sees. Indeed, most adults cannot report what they see or what happens to them with absolute accuracy, provided that they are in any way personally interested in or affected by the objects or the events which they attempt to describe.

A parent who has a four- or five- or even ten-year-old child who lives in a make-believe world most of the time need not be apprehensive that the child will never be able to see and report things as they are and events as they occur. At the same time, it is desirable when a child reaches the age of five or six, and increasingly as he grows older, that he should be helped to give an accurate report concerning some of the objects he sees and what happens about him. When he starts to school and has lessons in arithmetic and nature study and geography and manual activities he should be required then carefully to distinguish between what he fancies and what he actually sees or experiences. There will be little danger if he has good instruction that he will go up into the teens thinking that imaginery objects and happenings are real and report them as such.

CHAPTER XXXIX

CURIOSITY

Five children ranging from eight to fifteen years of age are examining a complex object, the construction and use of which they do not understand. The object was given by an electrician to a boy eleven years of age. He has brought it into the group and has begun to examine it with a view to determining how it is put together and how it works. He is intensely interested in his task, and he keeps saying, "This is the way it works. Now I see how it is made. I am sure I can take it apart," etc., etc. Meanwhile the other children are giving concentrated attention to what the boy is doing. Each child is telling him what he should do. They are as excited over the mystery as he is himself. Their advice annoys him and he keeps calling to them to "keep still," to "let me alone." He can solve the puzzle, he thinks, if they will simply look at him and not instruct him; but his remonstrances have practically no effect upon the other children. They keep reaching for the object and saying, "Let me take it," "I see

what to do with it;" "I can show you how to handle it," and so on.

Finally the oldest child does get it away from its original possessor but not with the latter's consent. He protests, saying that if they will "keep their hands off" he will soon have the mystery unravelled. But they cannot restrain themselves, though they do not intend to be disagreeable. They are all the best of friends, coöperating with one another in their enterprises, but now they are so dominated by the passion to take a hand in solving this problem that they are not aware that they are rude. Considerations of propriety, respect, ownership and everything of the kind are temporarily held in abeyance. The one thing that fills consciousness is the determination to solve that mystery. The most aggressive member of the group plays the principal rôle in manipulating the object, but every member is eager to get the thing into his own hands believing that he can do what the others are unable to do.

This scene is typical of situations that are arising constantly among normal children and probably even among adults, though the latter have, of course, acquired some power of self-control, which means that particular ideas or interests cannot gain complete mastery of them. With the normal adult considerations of propriety, etc., will restrain an impulse to grab an interesting object away from another individual; but it is different

with the child. One can see children who ordinarily have the most delightful relations toward their parents but who are wholly unrestrained when they are interested in some object or some undertaking. They are practically hypnotized by anything which appeals to them strongly, and so it gains control of all the avenues of their thought and their action.

Nature evidently implanted this impulse to master difficulties for a useful end. If a child were content to sit by while others took the initiative in solving problems what would he gain therefrom? It is a simple principle of psychology that an individual can understand and appreciate only what he does for himself. Mere looking on while others do things will not yield understanding. In the group described above, every child when he was acting as an onlooker was sure he knew how to solve the problem; but when he tried to solve it he discovered that he had not perceived accurately. Error can be detected only by putting it to the test. So while this great passion of the child to be self-active in solving the mysteries about him often brings him into conflict with people, nevertheless it is his only safeguard against feeble-mindedness. One who appreciates the profound character of this passion and sees its significance in mental development will seek only to guide, never to repress or prohibit its manifestation.

CHAPTER XL

CLUMSINESS

A mother who was observing her ten-months-old child trying to pick up a small bit of cotton on the floor, remarked—"Isn't it strange how clumsy a young child is in the use of its fingers? I should think with such small, dainty fingers he would not be clumsy at all."

There is a very important difference between having small, dainty fingers, and being able to use them in the performance of fine, delicate tasks. Many persons who have large and apparently coarse fingers can use them in very delicate ways. The *use* of the fingers depends mainly upon nervous development and control, rather than upon their daintiness or coarseness of structure.

Some persons never reach the place where they can perform precise actions with their fingers. Feeble-minded individuals, even though they are mature, are often unable to do precise work. Observers looking at such feeble-minded persons often exclaim—"Their hands seem so crude and awkward. They are as clumsy as children." This is exactly the case. They are children in nervous

and mental development, and they have the fingers of children so far as *use* is concerned, though they may have the fingers of adults so far as *structure* is concerned.

You who are reading these lines, try this experiment: Imagine that you have no joints in the thumb or the fore-finger, and then try to pick up a pin from the floor. You will note that you cannot perform a precise act with the thumb and fore-finger used as though they lacked joints. If you bend the fore-finger at the first point you can perform more precise actions with it than if it is used without any flexion at all. But you can perform the most precise acts when both the thumb and the forefinger are flexed so that the very tips are brought in opposition to, or in coöperation with, one another. A young child tends to use the thumb and forefinger as though they had no joints or rather stiff ones. He does not send his mind, so to speak, out to the tips of the thumb and fore-finger. In more exact terms—he cannot differentiate the tips of his fingers from the fundamental action of moving the finger and the thumb as a whole.

You have probably observed that when you are fatigued it is difficult to perform tasks demanding the precise coördination of the tips of the thumb and the forefinger. At the same time, you may not notice any lack of control or disturbance whatever in the use of the hand or the arm. Why are tasks

requiring the precise use of the tips of the fingers affected first in fatigue? Because it is a law of nervous action that the centers controlling the most coördinated activities suffer first in any nervous disturbance. Those centers that control the great fundamental muscles—as the biceps, the leg muscles, the trunk muscles—are not put out of commission in a crisis as soon as the “higher” centers.

This is illustrated in the case of one who is becoming intoxicated. The effect will be revealed first in his inability to do precise tasks with the tips of the fingers. The fist will not show the disintegrating effect of alcohol until some time after the fingers are affected. A man who is drunk and who can not pick up a pin or write his name or do any delicate task may be able to fight with terrific violence. That is to say, the nervous centers that control the biceps and the fist resist the influence of alcohol longer than do the centers controlling more highly coördinated actions. A drunken man cannot articulate the more difficult combinations. For instance, his *s*'s degenerate into *sh*'s. If he becomes “dead” drunk, all of the consonantal sounds will disappear from his speech, and he will be unable to do anything but utter the elemental vowels, which are made without coördinating the tongue, palate, and lips. In drunkenness these latter mechanisms which are coördinated in delicate ways in the making of consonantal sounds are

rendered useless temporarily. If one should get drunk a number of times, the number differing in different cases, there would be a permanent disturbance of the nervous centers used in coördinating the tongue, palate, and lips, and the individual would lose the power of speech, except that he might utter some of the vowel sounds; but he would be practically thrown back into earliest infancy.

This law of development explains why the baby has such awkward, clumsy fingers. When he takes his cup at the table he grasps it differently from the adult. He puts his fingers inside the rim and presses against the palm of the hand. The thumb may not be used at all in holding the cup. The adult, on the other hand, seizes the cup between the thumb and the fingers. In the same way the child holds his spoon and his knife and fork differently from the adult; his seizure requires more hand than finger and thumb action. The thumb does not play much of a part in the baby's grasping.

A baby usually has accidents when he handles sharp or delicate objects, or performs tasks requiring precise coördination. Wise parents provide a rubber table cloth for a young child. Adults like to use delicate objects requiring fine control, especially at the table. But there is certain to be trouble if they bring a baby to the table and expect him to use the sharp or delicate objects there in the

same precise way that they themselves use them.

Nature evidently intended that a young child should not attempt tasks demanding a high degree of coördination, such, for instance, as threading a needle, or writing with a fine-pointed pen. The child should use his biceps in relatively coarse and clumsy actions before he should use his fingers in performing fine and delicate tasks. He should use a hammer before a needle, for instance. When he begins to write he should use a pen with a coarse point. If a young girl does any sewing at all, it should be with a large needle, and the work itself should be coarse.

In the home young children should have large toys that will require the use of the large and fundamental instead of the fine and more accessory muscles. It is a mistake to provide very small blocks, for instance, for the baby. Usually a child who has only these small toys is likely to become fatigued soon, and then he will be irritable and discontented. In the same way, a girl should have a large doll, so that the dressing will not demand fine coördinated action.

And when the child enters school he is still growing principally in his fundamental nervous centers, and so he should use his large muscles mainly. That is to say, he should be permitted to do large and relatively coarse and clumsy work. In writing, he might better use chalk at the board than a pen at his desk. If he does use a pen, it

should have a large holder, preferably one made of cork. The holder should be at least three-eighths of an inch in diameter. If it is smaller than this it requires too precise coördination of the tips of the thumb and the fingers. A young child should use a lead pencil three-eighths of an inch in diameter, with soft lead. The use of a pencil one-eighth of an inch in diameter with hard lead is likely to fatigue a child very quickly. It is all the worse if he has to write on glazed paper.

Observe a child five or six years of age who is required to write with a pen with a metal holder an eighth of an inch or less in diameter, and with a fine, hard point. You will note a good deal of tension in his fingers, and soon you will see this tension spreading over his whole body. When ever a child of this age feels that he must do a fine, precise, delicate task, he overdoes it. He makes a tremendous effort simply because he cannot easily control the muscles required to perform a delicate task. He translates a precise task into one demanding much muscular effort, and so he "bears on" when he writes. He says, though not consciously, "Here is a hard task for me, and so I have got to put all the muscle I can into it." Unfortunately, the more muscle he puts into it the less successful he is.

The law is that the child grows gradually from awkward, clumsy, coarse action, to delicate, coördinated, precise action. The whole period of his

development, from birth to full maturity, is required to develop the highest degree of coördinated activities of fingers, of tongue, and of the body as a whole. In some places children are treated as though they developed in the opposite way—from fine, delicate, precise control to coarse, clumsy action. That is to say, they are required in the beginning to do delicate work, and as they grow older they are permitted to perform coarser and clumsier tasks. But running, jumping, throwing, yelling, working with hammer and saw, and all such general activities should precede those which require the precise use of the fingers, as in sewing, writing and so on.

CHAPTER XLI

MOTOR-MINDEDNESS

It is recognized by psychologists to-day that a child may be inferior in book work but superior in hand work. It is important for teachers and parents to recognize this type of pupil and provide for his needs. In order to impress the characteristics of the type a typical concrete instance may be given:

D. J. is now fifteen years of age. He is trying to complete the eighth grade in school. He was required to spend two years in the fourth grade and two in the sixth. He has caused his parents much worry, and has won the disfavor of his teachers. His father and mother are both well schooled and they have wished to put all their children through college. D. J. has an older brother and sister, and there are two younger children. Every member of the family but D. J. has done well in school; he is the only one who has failed to be regularly promoted. His brothers and sisters stand high in most of their work, while D. J. has been continuously low in all his studies except his

manual training, and a course he is now taking in elementary science.

The boy is fairly well developed physically, though he is not as heavy as some boys of his age. He has had good health, but his dentist says that his teeth are soft, which indicates that he does not assimilate the mineral elements in his food as fully as he should do. He is fond of athletics, and is a leader in any game which he plays. He is on the basketball team for his school; he plays baseball well; he can swim as well as most boys of his age; there are few boys in the community in which he lives who can row a boat or sail one as well as he can; and he has won medals in running hurdle races.

The father of this boy has made his way in the world entirely by his own efforts. He has developed to an extraordinary degree the power of concentration upon any task he undertakes. He has been inclined to be impatient with D. J., thinking he could do better work in school if he would. The father has thought it was a question of *will*, not a question of *native ability*. The boy's teachers have held the same opinion. They have scolded him time and again because he did not have perfect lessons. He has been kept after school day after day and week after week, partly for discipline, and partly in order that he might spend more time on his lessons.

D. J. has a brother three years younger than

himself who skipped the sixth grade, and who will complete the seventh grade this year. The teacher of these boys frequently tries to shame D. J. by comparing him with the younger boy. She says: "You don't know as much about this lesson as Frank does, and he is so much younger than you. I shouldn't think you would like to have a younger boy outstrip you this way. If you would try, you could do the work."

D. J. takes criticism of this sort without a murmur, but one can see that it hurts him. The teacher resorts to this method of discipline over and over again, but without any good results. Still she keeps at it. The father also has a tendency at times to make comparisons unfavorable to D. J.

But there is another phase to the story of D. J.'s ability and disposition. His mother says that whenever she wants anything done around the house, she asks D. J. to do it, and it will be done quickly, effectively and in a good spirit. If she asks any other member of the family to do anything, he is apt to say: "I am reading now. Won't you let me finish this chapter? I will do it when I get through," or "I don't see why I have to do it. Can't you get somebody else? Why can't you get D. J. to do it?"

The mother is inclined to be lenient with the children, and she permits them to "finish this chapter" before they comply with her request. But they not only finish one chapter; they finish

many chapters before they do it, and they will frequently forget about it completely. The chances are that the mother will turn to D. J. in the end to get the task done.

Note how the individual talents of these children are manifested in particular instances. Here is an actual case: D. J. and his younger brother had a lesson in grammar to prepare. They were required to locate the coördinate and adverbial conjunctions in a number of sentences, and reconstruct the sentences so as to use other conjunctions. When the task was completed, the younger boy had practically all of his sentences correct, whereas D. J. received a mark of only 60 for his work.

On the day on which this lesson was assigned in school, there was mowing to be done on the home lawn. It fell to the younger boy to begin the mowing, but the mower got out of order shortly after he started. He tried to repair it, but he could not determine what was wrong with it. He fussed with it for half an hour, and then gave it up. He went in search of D. J. who in a few minutes located the trouble, readjusted the mechanism by loosening some parts and tightening others, and improvised a piece of apparatus to replace a piece that had been lost; and again the mower was in good working condition.

Anyone who had watched these boys trying to solve this problem would have noticed a marked

difference in their concentration and their method of work. The younger boy *fussed* with the apparatus; he did not concentrate his attention upon it in a way necessary to examine each part and discover its relation to the other parts. Consequently, he could not detect what was wrong with the machine. One could see from the way he went at his problem that he did not have confidence that he could discover the trouble and remedy it. His attitude throughout showed incompetency.

The attitude and method of the older boy was exactly the reverse. He at once began manipulating the essential parts of the apparatus in the attempt to discover how they were related to each other. Soon he had the whole mechanism in his grasp. He saw how the machine ought to work, and what was out of order now that prevented it from working. The way he applied himself to his task showed that he had confidence that he could solve the problem. No one who observed him would doubt that he would not give up until he had seen clear through the situation and corrected the difficulty.

Go to their school and watch these boys applying themselves to their grammatical problems. The younger boy concentrates upon his work. Confidence in his ability to succeed is revealed in his features. As you observe him you can tell from the expression of his countenance that he is discovering the relations in his problem step by step,

and is making headway constantly. He is not distracted by anything which is going on around him.

Observe the older boy now. There is lack of confidence in his features, which is very different from his expression when he was working with the mower. He is easily distracted when he is solving a grammatical problem. He is not interested. So he cannot work his way through these problems except when they are quite simple.

Out in the big, buzzing world the younger boy would be called ordinary, possibly even dull. In the school he is bright, he is smart, he is at the head of his class. In the world of action the older boy would be regarded as a leader, as capable and efficient; but in school he is regarded as a dullard, and he is at the foot of his class. So the estimates which the school and the world put on individuals often differ very widely.

What should be done for these boys in order to accomplish the most for each one? First of all, D. J., the motor type, the one who can do things with his hands, who is quick, dependable, capable in practical situations, who has a poor memory for words and who fails in tasks based wholly on books—this boy's special talents should be provided for through concrete and manual work. In any school of one hundred pupils there will be a number of such boys. If they cannot be given opportunity for active, muscular work, they will not do well in school. At the same time, they must,

of course, master the elements of education at least fairly well. They must learn to read, to write, to spell, to speak correctly, to apply the principles of arithmetic to the problems of everyday life; and they must gain some knowledge of the history and geography of the world and especially of their particular locality. But they cannot move as rapidly in any of this work as the linguistic type of individual, and they should not be harshly criticised because they cannot do so.

There should be enough of mobility and plasticity in a school so that a boy who can learn to spell very easily may go forward as fast as his ability warrants; whereas the boy who cannot progress so rapidly may take more time without being nagged, although he should always be stimulated to do his best. He must not be allowed to contract idling habits. A boy with D. J.'s talents should never be urged to pursue a purely literary course. He should not be required to take any more linguistic studies in high school or in college than is necessary; and all his work in the language arts should be conducted with a view to gaining the ability to express himself easily and effectively. Such a boy should never be required to study grammar, either of the English language or any other, merely for discipline or to become learned in the subject.

The school of the past drove the motor, executive type of pupil out of school early. In an up-to-date

school to-day, though, executive, dynamic talent is regarded as of immense importance; and instead of leaving it undeveloped or suppressing it, it is cultivated by appropriate studies.

CHAPTER XLII

LOGINESS

Harold is eighteen years old. He has intelligent parents who have dealt wisely with him in respect to his health and mental development. But last spring he came near failing in the high school. He acknowledged that his work was below par, but he declared he could not arouse himself to do any better. His instructors complained of his inattention, and he said in explanation that he often could not keep awake in his classes, though he was anxious to secure the good-will of his teachers and to do all his tasks properly.

At the close of school he started out to do some work in canvassing during the summer. He did not get on very well, and he said his meagre success was due principally to the fact that much of the time he could not keep himself wide-awake. He said that often when he was talking to a prospective customer he could not make a good impression because he felt dull and lifeless.

Toward the latter part of the summer he brightened up a bit, and he accomplished more in his canvassing then. When he entered school in the

fall he felt in good trim. He kept awake in his classes, and he made a good record during the first two months. When the basket-ball season opened he won a place on the team. A few weeks after he began playing he felt coming over him the lassitude which had troubled him the preceding spring and summer. When his parents noticed the change taking place in his spirit and work they suspected that the basket-ball was too severe for him and they had an examination made. The physician found he had a "murmuring heart," which was caused undoubtedly by overstrain. The boy had played basket-ball the preceding winter, and as he was ambitious and earnest in all his activities he undertook more than his heart could stand. He had grown rapidly during the past two years, which made the heart quite susceptible to overstrain.

The boy's lassitude, or as his teachers called it, *laziness*, was due to the fact that his heart was not sending a full current of blood through his system. The brain suffered on this account. The brain will ordinarily be affected seriously in a case like this, because when the volume of the circulation is reduced and the propulsive power of the heart is weakened, the remote parts of the body, especially those above the heart, will be least well-supplied with blood.

The physician who found the boy's heart overstrained ordered him to stop playing basket-ball

for a year, when he would have completed his rapid growth, and his heart would then probably be stronger and he might be able to play the game again without injury. But if the cause of his apparent laziness had not been discovered he would have gone on over-taxing his heart, with the result that he would become constantly more "logy" and unable to exert himself intellectually. During the excitement of a basket-ball game he could be alert and vigorous because the heart would be doing its utmost then; and persons who noticed this would say that he could do well enough when he was playing, but he was stupid and lazy when he was required to work.

As a matter of fact, this particular boy never shirked any tasks when he was able to perform them. He has always had the right attitude toward his work and he has done more than his share in any situation in which he has been placed, except in the school-room. His teachers, who knew of his excellent record, thought he was simply "loafing on the job,"—that he was taking advantage of his reputation and deliberately "soldiering." This is the off-hand view which most persons would take of a case like this. But the chances are that when a boy who has been active and willing to do his tasks becomes lazy, something is going wrong with him physiologically. It may not be possible to discover what it is in all cases; but probably in the majority of instances a thor-

oughgoing physical examination, in which the condition of all the vital organs is determined, will reveal the cause.

If the cause is not due to an overtaxed heart or mal-nutrition or the lack of elimination, then it may be due to the absorption of toxins or body poisons. The following case will illustrate the latter cause of "loginess:"

Miss F. G., a university student, began to complain of annoying fatigue after slight effort. She had previously been able to do her work without strain or stress, but now her energy seemed to be always at low ebb. She said that almost everything she tried to do made her tired. She could not explain her condition herself, and her family physician said there was no apparent cause of her lack of vitality. Her friends advanced the explanation which is usually offered on such occasions—that she was over-working, and that she ought to stay out of the university for a year and "rest up."

Fortunately, she happened in her reading one day to come across the statement that symptoms of fatigue may be caused by absorption of toxins which are developed by infection in some part of the body. She read a description of a case in which a man who had lost his power to do any sustained work had an operation performed on his tonsils, and he had regained his vitality and his capacity to do a full day's work. This suggested to her the advisability of having an examination

made of her own tonsils. The report was negative; but her condition seemed so much like the one she had read about that she decided to consult another specialist. He looked at the tonsils, and they did not appear to be diseased; but he decided to turn them over so that he could see them on the under side, and he found they were seriously infected. The infection had spread into recesses underneath the tonsils, and all this region was a manufactory of toxins. These were being absorbed into the system and they depressed all the vital functions.

The diseased tonsils were removed, and all the infected regions were treated. To-day this girl is able to do all her work in the university without fatigue. She says she feels a thousand per cent better than she did before the diseased tonsils were removed.

There are many cases on record of children who at one time were regarded as lethargic, indifferent, "lazy," but who brightened up and gained interest and vigor when tonsils or adenoids were removed. Lately many cases have been reported of persons who have been cured of dullness and constant fatigue by the cure of infected areas in the nasal system. Frequently an attack of grippe leaves a sinus or an antrum infected. The victim absorbs the poisons which are developed in these cells or cavities. These poisons circulate throughout the system, and they depress or in some way disturb the nervous system and the vital organs. With

this handicap a child of any age is liable to lose out in competition with his more fortunate classmates.

When a child or youth begins to grow lethargic and to lose interest in activities which formerly appealed strongly to him; when he drops down in his work, whether physical or mental; when he has to urge himself to keep awake or to continue at any task, then it is practically certain that some vital organ has ceased to perform its customary functions properly, or the individual is absorbing toxins formed in some infected region. Every effort should be made to discover the source of trouble, and remove it if possible. If the bodily machinery can be got to work smoothly again, and if poisons can be eliminated, the child will probably be cured of his "laziness."

CHAPTER XLIII

FORGETFULNESS

A mother complains of the indifference of her fourteen-year-old boy. She is a widow and has three children younger than the boy. She has only a small income, and it is necessary for her to be very economical in the use of her resources. She is obliged to do her own work, even to making much of her children's clothing. Quite naturally and properly she thinks her boy should be of assistance to her. She has assigned to him especially the care of the furnace and the kitchen stove. But she says he frequently forgets these simple duties. She has often to attend to the furnace herself in order that it may be kept going. The youngest child is sitting or creeping on the floor a large part of the day, and the mother has often explained to the boy that it is necessary to keep the house at a uniform temperature so that the baby will not take cold. The mother is very sensitive to the baby's needs and is constantly watching the thermometer; but she says the boy seems to be entirely indifferent. He also neglects at least half the time to provide fuel for the kitchen

stove, so that she has to get it herself. She now asks why he is so careless, and whether he can be trained to be more thoughtful.

Is there a reader of these lines who has lived with children who has not at some time complained of their forgetfulness? Even in the best ordered families where there are children, one hears expressions like this: "Just see how you have tracked mud into the house, Frank, and I have cautioned you about it so many times. You don't take any pains at all to help keep the house clean. It is always dirty because of your carelessness."

Again, how frequently one hears lamentations like the following: "Here you boys have come to the table again without washing your hands and face. I have told you a hundred times that you must never come to the table looking as you do. Why can't you remember what you are told?"

Still again: "How many times must I tell you not to interrupt people when they are speaking? Don't you know it is very bad manners? And besides I have asked you not to do it." Once more: "Why don't you children go out-of-doors if you want to run and yell? The house is no place for such rough things. How often must you be told this before you will think of it yourselves?"

In many schoolrooms in which there are children from six to sixteen years of age, one may hear teachers say perhaps twenty times a day: "John, you are turning around in your seat interfering

with those behind you. You have already done that several times to-day, and I have spoken to you about it. I can't be speaking to you all the time. You stay after school for half an hour, and see if you can remember what I tell you in the future."

Are children really indifferent in respect to the matters mentioned above? Do they disobey commands wilfully? Or is it to be expected that a child will be thoughtless about many things that grown-up people never forget?

If the reader will devote a few minutes to an analysis of his own daily experiences, he will probably see illustrated a trait of human nature which will explain the apparent heedlessness and indifference of the young. Any adult who will search long enough will find numerous instances of his own lack of thoughtfulness. If he be a business man and his wife gives him a letter to mail on his way to his office, he may keep it in his pocket a week. He may attempt to justify his forgetfulness by saying that he should not have been requested to do this errand because his mind is so filled with his business that he cannot remember such tasks.

How many domestic trials are due to the failure of a business man to purchase articles which were mentioned to him when he left the house in the morning. The one who made the request probably kept her mind on the matter all day, for it concerned her chief interest. But for the man it is

precisely the other way. If he kept these errands in the forefront of his thought all day, he would fail in his business, so he puts them away back in what the psychologist calls the "margin" or "outskirts" of attention, and the chances are they will remain in the background when the man starts for home unless some particular association happens to call them back into the focus of attention.

Take a hundred men who were requested this morning to buy a spool of thread on their way home at night, and a psychologist would be willing to wager that ninety of them would forget it unless it were impressed by some special kind of association. If the errand were given in the ordinary way to the ordinary man, at least nine out of ten of them would forget it. And notice especially that they *ought* to forget it, because if it occupied their minds prominently enough to be remembered they could not give their attention to matters of much greater concern, and the result would be disastrous to themselves.

You parents who are reading these lines and who have thoughtless children, consider your own case. Suppose your six-year-old child on leaving the house in the morning for school asks you to give her doll a drink at ten. What are the chances that you will remember it? It is intensely vital to the child, and she would not overlook it; and she may think you are indifferent and thoughtless when you fail to remember it. Instances almost

without number might be mentioned to illustrate this trait. If at night you go over the experiences of the day, you will see that you have been just as thoughtless as your child. But here is the difference: the requests which you forget are not essential to the welfare of the household probably, though they may be tremendously important in the child's view. So tasks which the child forgets, though they may be of real importance in your estimation, are probably of little importance when regarded from his standpoint.

You feel it is necessary to keep a clean house, partly in order to protect health thereby, and partly also because the fashion of the neighborhood demands it. But your boy of nine is not yet sensitive either to the requirements for health or the aesthetic demands of the neighborhood. Nature has not developed anything in him which will make him sensitive. A caterpillar can have no appreciation whatever of the motions necessary to move through the air; but if it develops it will in due course be equipped to live in the air as a butterfly. Now it crawls on the earth and thinks of nothing but crawling; presently it will have wings, and it will use them and think of nothing but flying.

Suppose a frog which is much concerned about croaking and getting flies for dinner should scold its offspring, the tadpole, because it would forget to gather flies or to croak. It would be a waste of

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breath and energy for the frog, because the tadpole has no interest in flies or in croaking, since it is still a fish and cannot appreciate the interests and needs of its amphibious parent.

Now take the boy described at the outset. No fourteen-year-old boy has a keen feeling for the requirements of domestic life. Nature commands him to live out in the open; to be indifferent to soil on his hands and his face and his shoes, and dirt and dust in the house. The typical boy cannot be made very sensitive before the teens to the needs of a baby in the house. In due time, nature will make him sensitive to all these things, and then he will be thoughtful about them. A normal nineteen-year-old boy will not come to the table with soiled hands and face. By the time he is twenty-three, he will probably have developed some domestic feeling, and he will be thoughtful about any requests that relate to the welfare of the household, but he will not be as thoughtful about domestic matters as his father or mother. It is about the same as in the case of the caterpillar not developing wings until it is approaching adult life.

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All the profound impulses which the child brings into life with him are nature's commands. But he is born into a social environment very different from that for which his instincts were developed. This is one reason why there is so much conflict between the child and those among whom he lives. Adults who are not resourceful find it necessary

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to command and prohibit and punish children. But nature will have her way to some extent even in the face of the most rigorous repression.

But can nothing be done to make the child thoughtful about the things he must do in modern life? Yes, much can be done. In the first place, the teacher and parent must not give commands when the chances are that they will be forgotten no matter how much they are impressed. For instance—to tell a child who is not interested in the work of the schoolroom and not properly occupied that he must not communicate in any way with his classmates is folly. People who have written autobiographical sketches of their school days have often told how they would communicate when the rules of the school were strictly against it, and how they would take their punishment and go right back and whisper again. The teachers who made such rules were more at fault than the children who did not observe them.

Is there no way to prevent whispering in the schoolroom then? Certainly there is a way. After every fifteen minutes of work in the primary grades and twenty-five minutes in the grammar grades, pupils should be given a few minutes of freedom. They should understand that they are to do their visiting during these recess periods or else it will not be possible to give any recesses. The teacher can easily make a contract with them, that if they will apply themselves to their studies

during the work periods she will allow them frequent play periods for visiting.

The wise mother will follow the same general principle in giving her commands. If she thinks her boy should never come to the table without first having washed his hands and face, she will put up a reminder so that when he approaches the table in an unclean condition he will be warned. She will lead him day by day to see why clean hands are desirable. Or, if necessary, she will deprive him of his meal every time he comes to the table without having performed his ablutions. It will not take him a great while to make the connection between unclean hands and face and loss of a meal, even if it is not natural for him to do so. Of course, if the mother simply complains and does not have him bear the consequences of his thoughtlessness, she never can make him thoughtful about his acts. If she deprives him of a meal to-day because he has forgotten, but allows him to go free for the same misdeed to-morrow, he will not become thoughtful until nature of her own accord makes him sensitive to clean face and hands.

The boy who forgets to feed his cow or horse will very soon develop thoughtfulness about it if he is made to appreciate how the animals suffer on account of his neglect, or if he is deprived of some pleasure to be gained from these animals when they are properly cared for. This will be a more

effective way to train him than to whip him, for whipping is too general a kind of penalty, and it may leave the victim in an evil frame of mind without associating the punishment with the misdeed. Often a parent will scold a child every day, year after year, for the same forbidden act, which shows that the scolding is not an effective remedy for disobedience. Any form of correction that has to be constantly repeated without producing appropriate results is more likely to do harm than good.

CHAPTER XLIV

OBSTINACY

Modern psychologists have much to say about *fixed ideas*. Probably every person has some ideas which persist against all opposition, even punishment. If these ideas are in accord with our views of what they should be, we say the person has a strong character or a vigorous nature. But when one's notions are contrary to our own notions we say the person is obstinate, or willful, or pig-headed.

It cannot be too much emphasized that characteristic ways of action take possession of an individual, and he cannot abandon them merely on someone else's command. The only way that such notions can be eliminated is by putting other notions in their place. The more one talks about these persistent notions to a person who possesses them, the more firmly they are likely to become established within him.

Practically every child has persistent notions of some kind. Certain children have aversions to particular kinds of food or articles of dress or ceremonious behavior which are in effect of the

nature of persistent ideas. Here, for instance, is a boy who does not like to wear suspenders; but his father insists that he shall wear them, not because it makes any material difference whether or not he does so, but merely because the father has the fixed notion that the boy ought to wear them; and the boy has an equally fixed notion that he ought not to do so. Both are in one sense obstinate; the father is as much so as the boy and with less justification. Even if the boy has no good reason for wearing a belt instead of suspenders, he at least has come to think he has a good reason, and it is certain that he will offer resistance every time the father issues his command.

A much wiser course for the father to pursue would be to see that the boy's belt is not worn too tight, and to get one which will be hygienic (there are belts which are elastic and will not occasion any injury to a boy.) If the father does not like the appearance of the boy's trousers when they are worn with a belt, this difficulty can be easily overcome by making them so they will fit properly about the waist.

The father should recognize and respect the boy's aversion to suspenders, and he should make the best of it without precipitating a conflict. He ought to look ahead and not start something which cannot be carried through without strain and stress, unless it is a matter of fundamental importance and even then it should be possible

to change a child's notions without a prolonged and irritating struggle.

One father who coöperated with the writer in the study of children's persistent aversions has described a notion his boy possessed at one period which was the cause of a good deal of contention for a time. The boy did not like to wear long-sleeved underwear in winter, but the father thought his health demanded it. The boy resisted, and the father insisted. The former enjoyed good health and vigor; and besides, his companions wore short-sleeved garments; but still the father kept at him to make the change, mainly because he himself had acquired a settled notion on the subject, and he could not or would not take the boy's point of view.

If any parent having a problem like this to solve would keep track of his boy's health, and if it became certain that he was losing his energy because he was not wearing proper clothing, then the parent could make this plain to him, and it would probably have the desired effect on him. But a normal boy will not yield readily to suggestions that he adopt the parent's view in regard to clothing so long as he feels he is keeping well and he is more comfortable without certain garments than he would be with them. He will be particularly resistant to the suggestions of his parents if they run counter to the prevailing fashions among the members of his "set."

In most cases of conflict of this sort the parent is really at fault. The matter involved is not one of great moment so far as health or appearance or morals is concerned, although the child who is regarded as obstinate usually considers it to be of immense importance. Unless a parent can make it evident to his boy that his practice is of disadvantage to his health or his relations with other people or is harmful to the reputation of the family, he should let the matter drop.

Parents often say their children are obstinate in regard to food. They will not eat this or that article which is "good for them." Investigations have shown that an article of food is really not good for a person if he has a marked aversion to it. If a child has a fixed idea that he does not like eggs, they will do him little good, and may do him harm if forced down him. Experiments made by several investigators have indicated that unless food is appetizing the juices required to digest it will not be secreted and it will be a load on the system. So when a child will not eat a certain article of food it is wrong for a parent to keep insisting on his doing so and telling him that he is obstinate and willful.

What is the reason that one child in a family may follow any suggestion given him by his parents, while it may be just the other way with a brother or sister? Students of human nature distinguish persons according to the degree of

persistence of their ideas and desires. Some persons are so constituted that they become obsessed by anything they wish to secure or to accomplish, and it is very difficult or impossible to induce them to abandon their pursuit of these things. This is the *persistent* or perhaps *obstinate* type. But other persons are so constituted that whenever anyone proposes a plan to them, they are inclined to accept it and follow it. Their own ideas and desires do not gain complete possession of their conduct. Take a group of fifty children chosen at random, and one can see these types illustrated. There will be the pliable, docile type of individual who will always give way before the strong-minded, persistent, governing type.

Nature undoubtedly had a purpose in making persons different in this regard. She appears to have planned the social structure so that there would be headstrong leaders and docile followers; and parents and teachers should take account of this arrangement in training the young. They will need to deal much more skillfully and judiciously with the former than with the latter in order to avoid conflict of wills. But when a case of conflict arises, the more skillful the parent and teacher are in diverting the child's attention, the more successful they will be in leading him to do what is desired of him. Usually punishment is not the best remedy. Often it simply fixes the child more stubbornly in his resistance.

When a horse balks, it is ordinarily impossible to induce him to move on by whipping him. The trouble with the balky horse is that he is obsessed with the fixed idea of not moving. Anything which will divert his mind from this notion will set him free and nothing else will. It is the same with the child. Mere struggle between him and some one in authority will ordinarily lead to greater resistance. Nature seems to say to every strong-minded individual—"Assert your individuality. Do not be dominated by any one. Resist to within an inch of your life if people try to break down your will." Of course, this attitude often leads the child into trouble; but if parents and teachers appreciated the situation and were suggestive and constructive in dealing with it, there would not be so much persistent obstinacy, even on the part of strong-willed children.

CHAPTER XLV

UNRESPONSIVENESS

The following concrete case will bring the unresponsive type before us:

"My oldest daughter, as an infant, was a fine child but with peculiar tendencies. If hurt she wanted no sympathy—the usual petting and caressing made her furious. Although the object of our affection she seemed never to respond. If I went away she never expressed joy at my return; and when she grew older she objected to being kissed in public. At seven years of age a friend who is a psychologist said, 'What Gertrude needs for development is hero worship.' She is now fifteen and we have never found the hero. She hates to meet people, but loves to get by herself and read. She is a good student but seems to regard her teachers as natural enemies. Instead of enjoying the present she is constantly planning the future.

"I have been a pretty strict mother—insisting that she meet people, that she play the piano, dance and recite, instead of reading stories, going to the movies and eating fudge.

"Shall I withdraw now and let her work out her own salvation? She is absolutely truthful and scorns lies. She does not do herself justice and people do not love her."

This girl is an unusual type, but she is not the only one the writer knows who possesses the characteristics described. Since she has manifested these traits from the beginning it is evidence that they are not due so much to the methods of training as to original nature.

This girl is apparently as much masculine as feminine in her interests and temperament; modern psychologists recognize that there are various gradations between the clearly-marked masculine and feminine types. Now, if she is indifferent by nature to social conventions, if she likes to be alone and to read, why should she be coerced into participating in the usual social activities? Why should she try to make people like her? Isn't there a place for women who are not very particular about whether individuals or society like them? Why shouldn't such a person go on developing in an intellectual way? Of course, it would be better if she had social interests also, but it may be doubted whether they can be developed until the girl gets out into life where she is made to realize by hard knocks, if she really receives hard knocks, that she must like people and win them or be left out of the game. One cannot make her social minded by talking to her about it; she will be more

likely to go just the other way if she is nagged about it.

Mothers often worry unnecessarily about their daughters because they do not dress according to the fashions, or dance enough, or try to win the boys, and so on. The girls may be having a good time among themselves and may like the intellectual life, but the mothers are more conscious of the social demands, and are not themselves interested in intellectual activities. They probably have come to appreciate the value of giving a good deal of attention to social conventions, and they keep at their daughters incessantly to do the same.

A mother ought not to coerce a girl into meeting people, or taking part in social activities, or getting out into life, or dressing in accord with the style. But if she should be sent away to school, say, or if this is not practicable, if she could secure a position in which, in order to succeed, she would have to be social, she would probably cultivate a certain amount of interest in this direction. If she would not do it in response to an actual demand like this she would not do it at all.

It is probable that when this girl is twenty she will have more feeling for her parents and persons in general than she has now. Children at fifteen, girls as well as boys, are often much wrapped up in themselves. Even if they are expressive toward their parents they do not feel very profoundly devoted to them. The feeling of filial

devotion develops later. A mother ought not to be too much distressed about a young daughter's apparent lack of affection for her. She has not yet begun to realize what a mother really means to her,—what part she plays in her life. If she could go away from home for a while and have contact with the world outside she would think more of her mother when she came back. When she does go out into the world, let her make her own adjustments for a while. A mother should not be too much concerned about her daughter's welfare. Many children are alienated because their parents fuss over them too much.

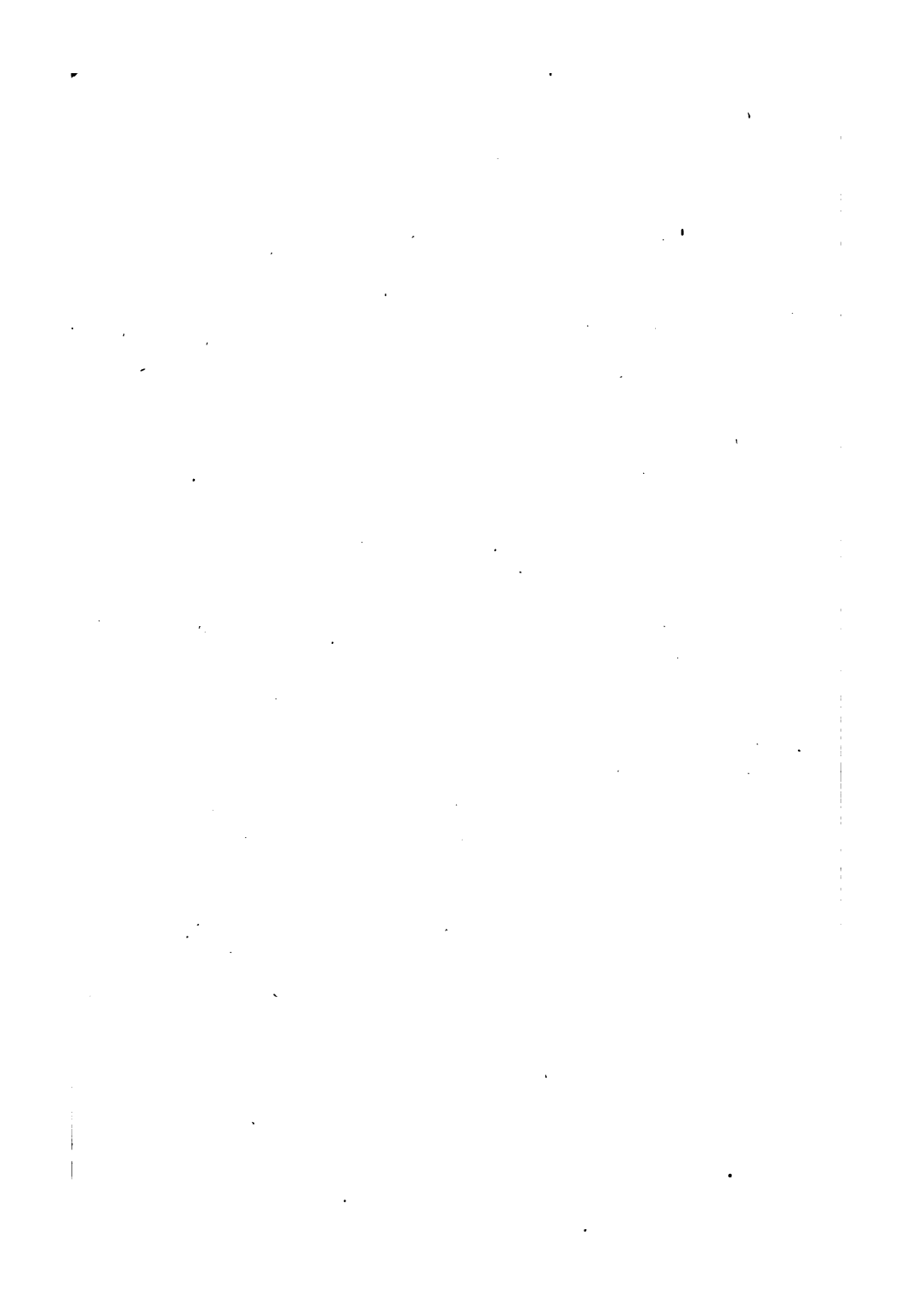
In response to the question, "Shall I withdraw now and let her work out her salvation," one may answer emphatically in the affirmative, so far as any explicit supervision is concerned. The thing a mother can do in a case like this is to arrange social contacts for a girl which will tend to put her at her ease, make her unconscious in the presence of others, and awaken her expressive nature. One cannot help her by commanding her to be expressive, or criticising her because she is not as expressive as one thinks she should be.

She will soon go to college possibly. If she does, she ought to join a sorority and thus come into intimate touch with a few associates, at any rate. This experience will tend to soften her reserve, and to make her less self-conscious. Also it would help her if she could have chums with whom she

could be quite at ease so that she would gain confidence in her ability to hold her own in a group.

But again, why should the mother be so anxious about this girl? If she is content with a rather isolated life; if she finds satisfaction in her own reflections, why should one try to develop social interests? There certainly is a place in the world for people who can be happy when they are working alone. Such persons derive pleasure from achievement rather than from personal intercourse. If Gertrude is unhappy because she is not as easy and expressive in her relations with friends as her associates are, then an attempt should be made to give her confidence and help her to be natural and at ease in her social relations. But if she is content with her present life, and if she is not a source of distress to others, then it is doubtful if one should try to change her life fundamentally.

As suggested above, the majority of parents play too dominant a rôle in attempting to shape the lives of their children. Nature intends that children shall not be precisely like their parents in their interests or their activities, and it would be better to let nature have her way more largely than most of us are spontaneously willing to do.



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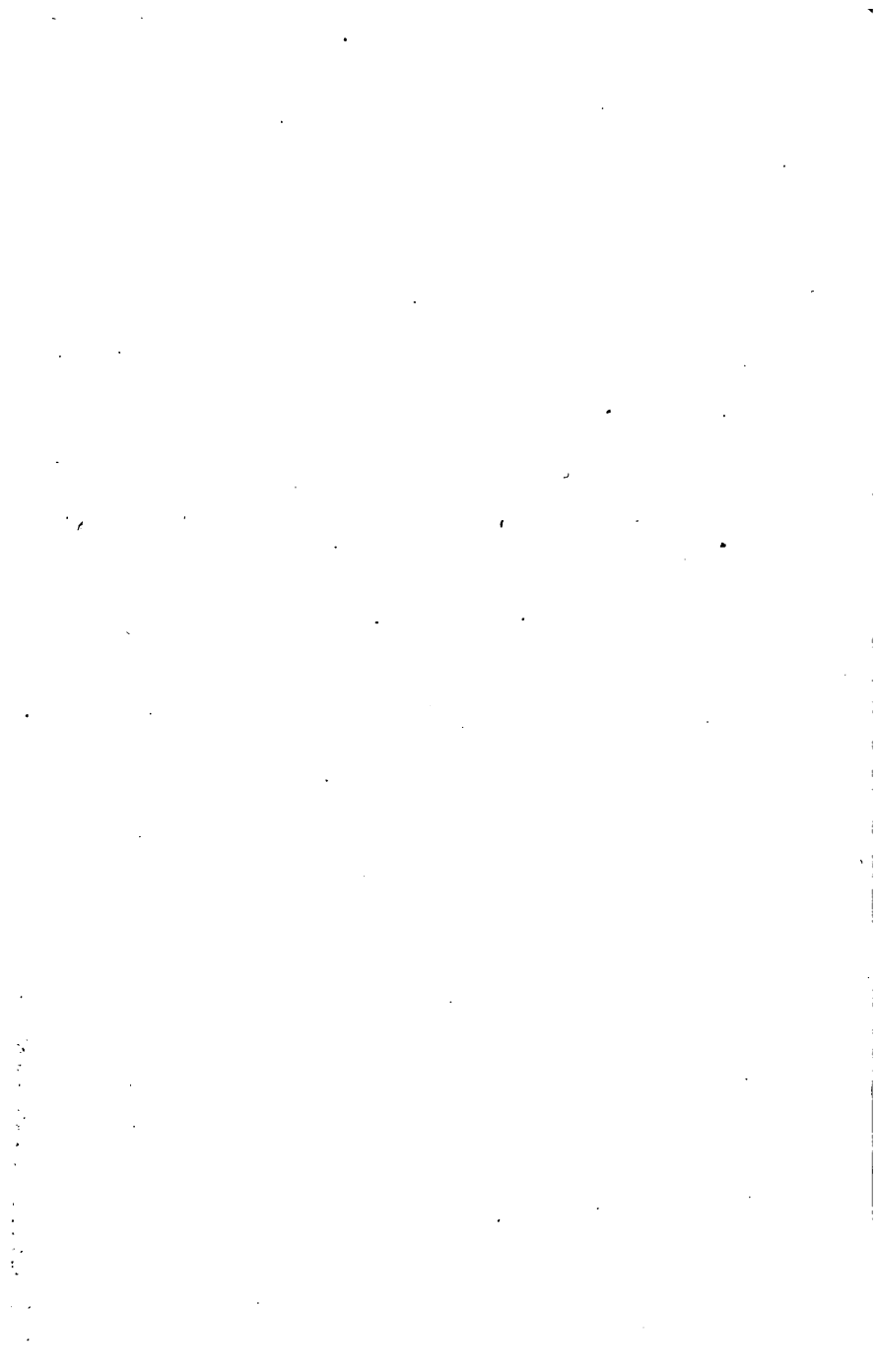
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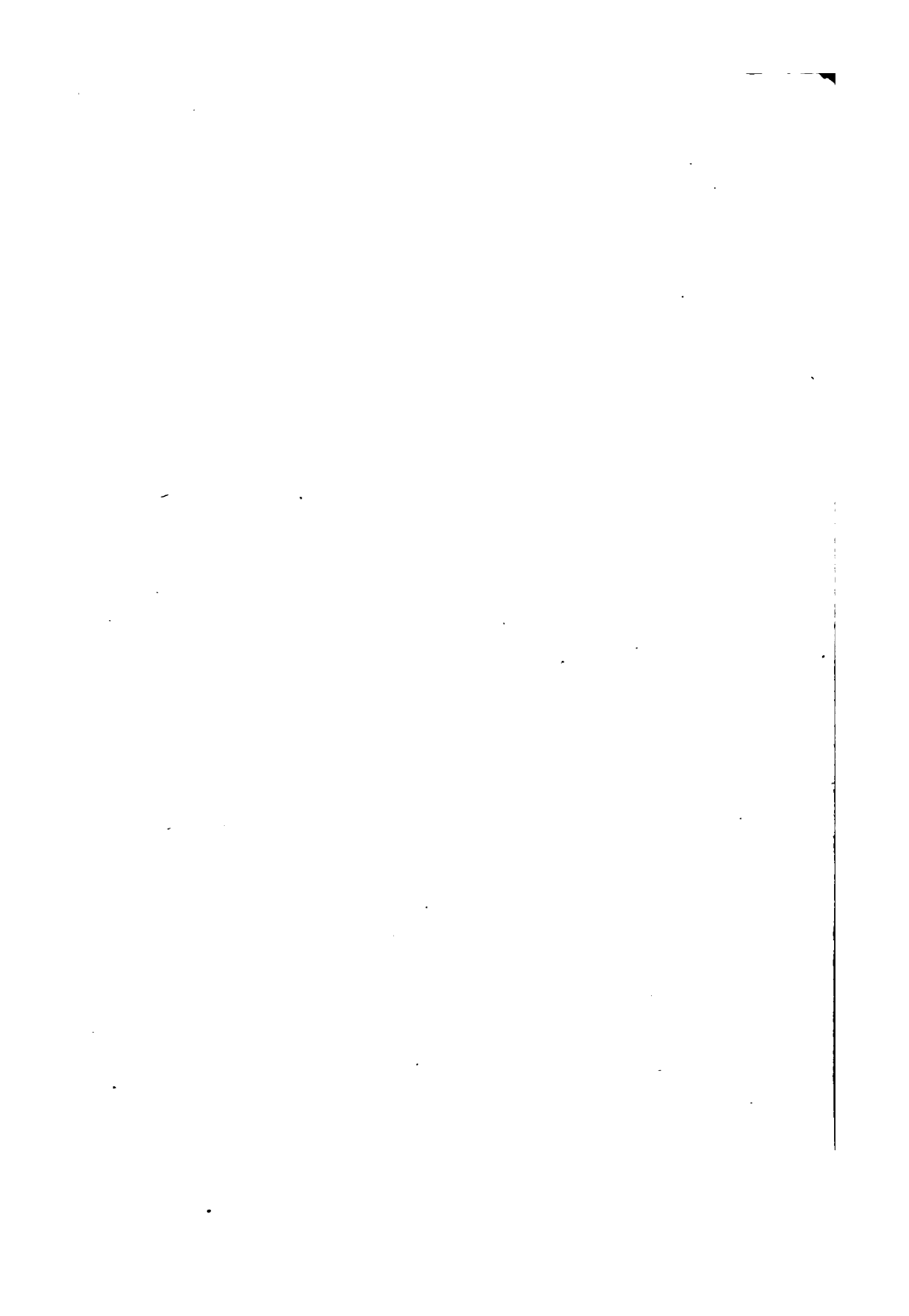
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